

Identification and Description of the Development of the  
Relationships Between Mentor and Mentee Teachers in the  
Halton Board of Education "Partners in the Classroom" Program

A.G. Wilson, B.A.(Hon)

Department of Graduate and Undergraduate  
Studies in Education

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Faculty of Education  
Brock University  
St. Catharines, Ontario  
Canada

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## Abstract

Fifteen mentoring pairs of teachers were randomly selected from each group of teachers that had participated in the Halton Board of Education "Partners in the Classroom" program during 1988/89, 1989/90, and 1990/91. Each teacher was personally interviewed. Interviews were recorded, transcriptions were prepared and examined and analyzed.

During the first part of the interview questions were asked regarding personal and professional demographics. The purpose of the second part of the interview was to gain information relating to the development of the relationships, over a three-year period, between mentor and mentee teacher participants in the "Partners in the Classroom" program.

The analysis of the data suggest that there are identifiable changes in the development of the relationship between the mentor teacher and the mentee teacher over time.

Implications from the study results that could enhance the induction program for new teachers are discussed.

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## CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the development of the relationship, over a three-year period experienced by mentor and mentee teachers participating in the Halton Board of Education (hereafter, the Board) "Partners in the Classroom" program (hereafter, the Program).

### Background of the Problem

During the last ten years (1982-1992), those responsible for teacher training and staff development have observed the mentoring process move to the forefront.

The mentoring process has been used for centuries as a method of disseminating information, educating and training. Mentoring is one way of assisting in a person's transition into a new role in an organization or community. It is, however, only during the past several years that this process has become a technique used in teacher staff development. This trend is further highlighted by the proliferation of formal mentor programs, being developed and implemented by many education organizations, for the purpose of training and induction of first-year teachers.

The Halton Board of Education is one of those organizations that has developed and implemented a mentoring program for their first-year teachers. The program has been operating for four years.

### Statement of the Problem Situation

The design of the Halton Program was based on a selection of the best parts of a number from programs that were being operated by other education organizations. Over the past four years, several surveys were conducted by the Board to determine the effectiveness of their own mentoring program, the level of participant satisfaction and as a method for obtaining suggestions about program improvement. Participant ratings, for the most part, have been very positive. It would appear that the program was successful because of the degree of commitment by the Board and the expertise and dedication of professional practitioners that are responsible for its operation and ongoing development. It was felt by the Board, however, that further significant improvements would be possible if they could identify and describe the development of the relationships between mentoring pairs in the Program not only during but after the formal one-year "Partners in the Classroom" Program. The Board, believed that by developing an understanding and being able to predict the growth and development patterns of these mentoring relationships, they could take advantage of improvement opportunities and, provide participants with more effective and timely support.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to identify and provide a description of development of the relationships between mentor and mentee teachers participating in the Board Program.

### Questions to be Answered

The question to be addressed is whether the development of the relationships between mentor and mentee teachers can be identified. The answer to a second question is dependent upon the first. How is the development of the relationship between mentor and mentee teachers best described?

### Rationale and Importance of the Study

Little (1989) noted that,

Many of the crucial questions surrounding the emergence of the mentor role, its nature and consequences, cannot be addressed without longitudinal [study] designs that distinguish between short-term and long-term effects on individuals and institutions. Most studies are cross sectional and concentrated on the early stages of program implementation and role development. (p. 64)

Such was the case with the Halton Program. There was a definite need to conduct a longitudinal study to examine the character of the relationship between the mentor and mentee during and beyond the formal program one-year relationship.

This type of study would provide the Board with the information needed to enable the coordinators of the Partners Program to improve its effectiveness.

#### Definition of Terms

Beginning Teacher: Usually a new graduate, that is a teacher with one to three years teaching experience.

Collegiality: "... the establishment of a professional relationship for the purpose of service and accommodation through the mutual exchange of perception and expertise" (Bower & Yarger, 1989, p. 14).

Holistic: Holistic refers to the total person --both professional and personal--ideas, values, philosophies, morals, ethics, attitudes, technical and professional understandings and capabilities.

Mentee: A teacher with one to three years teaching experience and feels his or her professional growth was fostered by a mentor in the Halton Program.

Mentor: A mentor is an experienced teacher who supports the dream of the protégé to grow personally and professionally.

- Mentoring: A process by which an experienced teacher in the Halton Board takes a personal interest in the development and education of younger or less experienced beginning teacher.
- Peer: "Someone having the same status in rank ... ability etc., as another" (Cayne & Lechner, 1988, p. 274).
- Role: "A role is a set of expectations about how a person in a given position in a particular social system should act" (Krammer, 1974, p. 52).

#### Scope and Delimitations of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to the investigation to determine whether or not there are identifiable stages in the mentoring relationship and to provide a description of those changes.

The purpose of this study is not to determine:

- the quality or effectiveness of the mentoring process as a training and induction tool;
- the quality or effectiveness of the Board Program;
- the degree of satisfaction of mentoring pairs; and
- the capability of the results to be used as a theoretical model.

This chapter has provided a description of the study in terms of:

- the background of the problem;
- a statement of the problem situation;
- questions to be answered;
- the rationale explaining reasons for the study; and
- the scope of the study and limiting factors.

Subsequent chapters of this report will provide:

- a literature review describing what other authors have to say about mentoring in general;
- the possible use of role theory as a means of organizing the mentoring process and also the use of mentoring as an induction and training tool;
- a description of the methodology used to conduct the study and analyze the results;
- a detailed discussion regarding the findings of the study; and
- discussion of the conclusions made.



## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This review is presented in two parts. The first part describes literature relevant to the general topic of mentoring and role theory while the second part focuses on mentoring as it relates to teacher induction programs.

### Historical Background

Brookfield (1981) describes self-directed learners as individuals who are able to plan, initiate and evaluate their own learning experiences. According to Tough (1979) the student and instructor need to be viewed as being equal and to increase the choices around what and how they learn. Knowles (1975, 1980) agrees and further indicates that any education process should take advantage of the learner's past experiences and use them to facilitate the present learning.

One way adults learn is through the mentoring process (Bova & Phillips, 1984). The mentoring process is a basic form of education for human development because it provides an holistic, yet individualized approach to learning (Lester, 1981). "Mentoring is a good example of experiential learning, that is learning resulting from or associated with experience" (Bova & Phillips, 1984, p. 16). "It involves dealing with individuals in terms of their total personality in order to advise, counsel, and/or guide them" (Decoster & Brown, 1982, p. 5).

History provides us with countless examples of mentor-mentee relationships such as Mentor and Telemachus, Christ and his twelve apostles, Socrates and Plato, Freud and Jung, and Medici and Michelangelo.

While the mentoring process has been recognized and used for centuries, according to C.A. Wright and S.D. Wright (1987) the recent popularity of the concept of mentoring has been primarily based upon the work of Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levenson and McKee (1978). Roche in 1979 and Missirian in 1982 both claim that

in the developmental career stages of the men in that [Levinson's] study the importance of a mentor in occupational success was emphasized. Having a mentor is associated with increased job satisfaction, higher salary, faster promotion, firmer career plans, and the increased probability that the protégé will also become a mentor." (C.A. Wright & S.D. Wright, 1987, p. 204)

Hamilton (1981) provides an apt description of Levinson's work as emphasizing

... the significance of mentors in the career advancement of men. He [Levinson] sees the mentoring relationship as a vital part of the developmental work of early and middle adulthood of men, and that the relationship is found most often in professional work settings. Defining mentoring not in terms of roles but

in terms of the character of the relationship and the functions that it serves, he describes a mentor as a transitional figure, a mixture of a good parent and good friend who serves as a teacher, sponsor and guide. The mentor possesses and represents the qualities that the younger professional someday hopes to acquire. An enhancer of professional skills and intellectual development, the mentor often facilitates and influences a novice's advancement within the profession. He can provide counsel and moral support during times of stress and encouragement during risk-taking endeavors. As a sponsor, he is an inviter, encourager, and welcomer into the adult world. He is the practical helper and guide as the young person struggles with the tasks, details, and challenges of his profession. With the hope that someday they may function as peers, a novice senses genuine concern from his mentor about his struggle to be successful. Most of all, Levinson found the mentor to be most crucial to his protégé in the supporting of and the facilitating toward the realization of a young man's dream. ( p. 144)

Levinson indicates that the men in his study had almost exclusively male mentors. He therefore speaks of mentors in the male gender (Levinson et al., 1978).

Zey (1984) considers a mentor to be "a person who oversees the career and development of another person usually a junior, through teaching counselling, providing psychological support, protecting, and at times providing and sponsoring. The mentor may perform all of the above functions during the mentor relationship" (p. 7).

Anderson & Shannon (1988) describe the mentoring: a nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teacher, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between mentor and protégé.

The essential attributes of this definition are:  
a) the process of nurturing, b) the act of serving as a role model, c) the five mentoring functions (teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counselling and befriending), d) the focus on professional and/or personal development, and e) the ongoing caring relationship."  
(p. 48)

Zey in 1984, stated that:

The protégé receives knowledge, personal support, protection and promotion while the mentor derives assistance on the job, information, loyalty and

prestige. As a result of the mentoring relationship, the organization achieves managerial succession, managerial development, reduced turnover and increased productivity. (Clark & Zimmer, 1989, p. 26)

Marso and Pigge (1990) stated that teacher induction programs, designed to deal with the difficulties new teachers experience during the transition into the profession, have been used since the early 1960s:

Neither the knowledge that novice teachers do experience many difficulties during their transition into the teaching profession nor the concept of induction programs to facilitate this transition, however, are new to educational literature ... Just in recent years however, has the educational profession broadly embraced these programs ... only recently have these novice teacher programs been studied extensively. (p. 3)

"Role theory represents a collection of concepts and a variety of hypothetical formulations that predict how actors will perform in a given role, or under what circumstances certain types of behaviours can be expected" (Hardy & Conway, 1978, p. 17). According to this theory society and its institutions, such as the educational system, are a framework within which individuals play out their roles.

A role can be defined as the pattern of wants and goals, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, values, and

actions which members of a community expect should characterize the typical occupant of a position. Roles prescribe the behaviour expected of people in standard situations. They specify what the individual must do, to whom he has obligations and upon whom he has a rightful claim. They also encompass the duties and obligations as well as the rights, of the specified position....This permits social interaction to be an orderly process most of the time...Roles are learned through the process of socialization. (Robischon & Scott, 1969, p. 52)

Kramer (1974) defines a role as "a set of expectations about how a person in a given position in a particular social system should act" (p. 52). When roles are not clearly defined role ambiguity occurs.

Role ambiguity is defined as a lack of the necessary information available to a given organizational position. One way to avoid role ambiguity is to imply a need for and the availability of various kinds of information. In order for the person to conform to the role expectations held by members of his role set, certain information is required. (La Rocco, 1978, p. 43)

La Rocco (1978) says that three major sources of role ambiguity have been identified. The first is that the size and complexity of modern organizations exceeds the individual's ability to comprehend. A second source is the rapid rate of organizational change. A third source of role ambiguity is restricted channels of communication which result inadequate information on the operational level. (p. 44)

For the beginning teacher all three sources for role ambiguity are often present in a modern school setting. Role ambiguity is not an uncommon experience for the beginning teacher when attempting to understand and deal with the many new and often difficult situations in the school and in the classroom. Mentoring programs are being introduced by a large number of boards in North American educational organizations. This should reduce role ambiguity and provide for more effective and positive induction of new teachers.

Lea and Liebowitz (1983) describe the roles played by mentoring pairs in behavioural terms. These terms focus on ten behaviours that mentors perform: teaching, guiding, advising, counselling, sponsoring, role modelling, validating, motivating, protection, and communication. These behaviours can be applied to correspond to the roles Cranton (1992) suggests adult educators play. These roles are expert, planner, instructor, facilitator, resource person,

manager, model, mentor, co-learner, reformer, reflective practitioner, and researcher.

Rites of passage, those societal rituals that signify the change from one position to another, help to modify the participant's self concept so that the new role can be conceptualized as not incongruous with the self. The lack of such rites may create uncertainty in the new role. (Robischon & Scott, 1969, p. 53)

All of the definitions and descriptions cited from Role Theory could be used to structure mentoring programs, define the players roles and ensure the "rites of passage" (Robischon & Scott, 1969, p. 53) the new teacher, the results of which will benefit the mentor, mentee and the educational organization.

The next section looks at the literature describing mentoring in the teaching profession.

### Mentoring in the Teaching Profession

To develop a thorough understanding of the subject prior to undertaking this study, a comprehensive literature review of mentoring in the field of teaching was conducted.

The balance of this literature review focuses upon mentoring processes as they apply to beginning teacher induction programs.

According to Judy Arin Krupp (1985), mentoring is: defined as a process by which a trusted friend and



experienced supervisor or advisor takes a personal and direct interest in the development and education of younger or less experienced individuals has helped both older and younger persons with life development tasks [Levinson et al., 1978; Vaillant, 1977; Witley Anderson & Lauderdale, 1980]. A mentor is one who supports the dream of the protégé and helps the protégé to grow personally and professionally. The protégé is defined as one who feels his or her professional growth was or is fostered by another individual. (p. 154)

Most new teachers are reluctant to ask for advise and counsel, support and assistance for fear that they may be judged poorly by their fellow teachers and superiors. W. Gray and M. Gray (1985) stated that

Because beginning teachers want to achieve professional autonomy and status equality with their colleagues 92 percent do not seek help from colleagues except indirectly by swapping stories about personal experience. This hides novices' weaknesses but does not enable them to obtain help with those factors-inexperience, unavailability of expertise, and ambiguity about goal attainment-that produce 93 percent of teacher stress related to performing professional tasks ... more than experience swapping is needed: a sense of community must be established, consisting of interdependence, shared concerns, a sense of common

fate, and a sense that other stand by when one is under stress or uncertainty about what to do. (p. 39)

Featherstone (1988) indicates that during the first months of teaching, the beginning teacher's classroom academic expectations are lowered and they begin to take a more authoritarian approach. For a large number of beginning teachers these goals shift during the first semester. The attitude toward climate changes from wanting to foster a fun and relaxed classroom environment to wanting one that is strictly controlled and structured. She also discusses the transition from the teacher college graduate to classroom teacher, and how:

- many move away from their ideals and visions;
- discipline becomes the most important concern;
- the beginning teacher has little time for constructive reflection; and
- in addition to career issues the first year teacher is often going through many other stressful changes such as, getting married, moving to an apartment, learning to be an adult, and having left a network of friends to work with a group of strangers in a foreign culture.

Beginning teachers need to be nurtured, cared for, protected and supported, particularly during the early part of their new career.

One can speculate that if a beginning teacher's first experience with on the job and professional development is highly effective and rewarding, that teacher will have a positive attitude about other professional development opportunities. If such a teacher approaches future professional development with a more open mind, his or her performance is more likely to improve than is the performance of a teacher who has a poor attitude. A teacher who experiences a meaningful and systematic induction into the profession will view the profession more positively and judge his or her own decision to enter the profession as a good one. Such a person is also more likely to encourage others to enter the profession. (Huling-Austin, Odell, Ishler, Kay & Edefelt, 1989, p. 52)

Odell (1989) believes that mentoring type programs are one of the key approaches that appears to have a great deal of promise in an effort to address the issues and problems mentioned above by providing the support and help needed by beginning teachers.

Similarly, Mager (1990) in his "Report to the State Education Department on the New York State Mentor Teacher-Internship Program for 1986-1987 and 1987-1988," points toward the comments of one intern involved in the program:

We had an alumni dinner where all of the mentors and interns had the opportunity to get together to share their experiences of being a member in this program from 1986 to present. Being involved in this program provided a lot of support systems for me. I think it helped me open up to feel free to ask questions even when I sometimes thought they weren't important. My mentor always and still does reassure me that all my questions are important. I never hesitate to confer with her even today. (p. 24)

Judith Warren Little and Linda Nelson (1990) indicate that the mentor role

is important because we cannot continue to rely upon a sink-or-swim process to introduce newcomer's to the complex work of teaching. The mentor role is new. There are few precedents for such leadership positions in the teaching occupation or in schools. Some teachers have been fortunate in receiving attention and assistance from others. But such arrangements have typically been a matter of chance. (p. 14)

Feiman-Nemser, Odell and Laurance (1988) suggest that this type of program is based on a number of assumptions. They are as follows:

- Beginning teachers, although well prepared in content and theory, still have much to learn about putting their knowledge to work.

- Providing new teachers with guidance, support and assistance in analyzing teaching enhances their teaching effectiveness.
- Assisting the beginning teacher is good economy. It speeds up gaining full operational effectiveness for the new teacher and reduces the number who leave the profession out of disillusionment and frustration. (p. 22)

Accordingly Odell (1987) states:

[several] primary goals of teacher induction programs seem appropriate. They are, to:

- provide continuing assistance to reduce the problems common to beginning teachers;
- support development of knowledge and skills needed by beginners to be successful in their initial teaching positions;
- integrate beginning teachers into the social system of the school, the school district and the community;
- provide an opportunity for beginning teachers to analyze and reflect on their teaching with coaching from veteran teachers;
- initiate and build a foundation with new teachers for the continued study of teaching;
- increase positive attitudes of beginning teachers about teaching; and

- to increase the retention of good beginning teachers in the profession. (p. 20)

During the past several years a number of induction training programs have been established throughout North America.

The following is a reference list containing some of the locations and titles of the more prominent training programs.

- California - Induction for the Beginning Teacher
- District of Columbia - Intern-Mentor Program
- Florida - Beginning Teacher Program
- Georgia - Alternative Certification Program for Critical Teaching Fields
- Indiana - Project Credit
- New Hampshire - One-Year Internship
- New Mexico - Teacher Induction Program
- Nash County, N.C. - The Novice Teacher and the Mentor
- Wake County, N.C. - Mentor Novice Program
- Tennessee - M.A.T. - Internship Program
- Virginia - Teachers Need Teachers
- West Virginia - Teacher Induction Program
- Wisconsin - Program for Mentoring Teachers
- New York - Mentor/New Teacher Project.

Detailed descriptions, names and addresses of contacts, should any further information be required, is contained in

the Appendix of the book entitled Assisting the Beginning Teacher, published by the Association of Teacher Educators, Reston, Virginia (1989).

Watson and Kilcher (1990) mention a number of programs in Ontario. Board programs described in their publication include the Ottawa Board, Durham, Lincoln County, East York Board and the Kent County Board.

Several publications provide program planners and trainers with comprehensive information regarding the planning, organization, execution and evaluation of mentoring programs for beginning teachers (Huling-Austin, Odell, Ishler, Kay, & Edelfelt, 1989; Joyce & Showers, 1988; Little, 1989; Murray & Owen, 1991; Watson & Kilcher, 1990).

Cole and McNay (1988) point out that these programs will work effectively "only if all groups and individuals concerned with teacher education and professional development are involved and committed to the concept of induction programs from the start" (p. 44).

Furthermore, their analysis of successful programs indicate general agreement on the following requirements for the program:

- workload adjustments for all participants;
- reduced class size and appropriate class assignments for beginning teacher; and
- substantial opportunity for beginning teachers to discuss and share their experiences with

peers, support teachers and others in a collegial supportive and non-evaluative environment.

Participants in the program must be willing to assume the following responsibilities:

- Principal: establishment and maintenance of a climate in the school in which the induction program is valued as an appropriate part of the larger school-based professional development plan; identification of suitable support (mentor) teachers; provision of appropriate teaching assignments for beginning teachers and support teachers; assumption of overall responsibility for providing an appropriate and coherent program; and communication of program goals and activities to school personnel and the community.
- School Board: recognition and support for the special nature of the induction process, the special status of the beginning teachers, and the special contribution of support teachers; commitment to induction programs as a larger region-wide professional development plan; financial support for the costs of support teachers, resource persons, and materials required for a successful induction program;



and advocacy and promotion of induction programs in the community.

- Faculties of Education: collaboration with schools and school district personnel on program design, training of support teachers in induction programs; commitment to working with schools and school boards toward establishing stronger connections between pre-service educational programs and the activities of the induction year - that is towards the beginning of a true continuum in teacher education; appropriate recognition (in terms of workload, promotion and tenure) of the contribution made by faculty members to induction programs.
- Teachers' Federations: recognition of, and support for the special nature of the induction process, the special status of beginning teachers and the special contribution of support teachers; recognition of induction programs as essential components of the process of becoming a professional person; and advocacy and promotion of induction programs within and outside the profession.
- Ministry of Education: financial and legislative support for the status of beginning teachers and induction programs.

- Beginning Teacher: commitment to the profession and to personal excellence as a teacher; and commitment to the induction program as one part of a personal long-term professional development plan.
- Support Teacher: commitment to the responsibility of professional persons to participate in the training and induction of newcomers; commitment to training as a support teacher and willingness to serve as a resource person, model, consultant and confidant for the beginning teachers; and commitment to participation in the overall professional development program in the school.

Heller and Sindelar (1991) indicated that the superintendent has a key role to play:

The superintendent's involvement in the teacher mentor program will depend upon day-to-day priorities. Except in very small school districts, the superintendent is usually physically removed from the daily operations in individual school buildings. However the physical distance does not preclude being well informed, allocation resources, and giving the program a high profile. It is important for the superintendent to communicate in word and deed that the mentor program is an essential part of the district's staff development

effort devoted to the induction of the new teachers. The superintendent also must work with the board to ensure that the program is adequately funded. (p. 39)

Bolton (1980) designed a model depicting the career stages and functional relationship within each stage. This model was further developed by Appel and Trail (1987). They suggested that, "The adult learner - facilitator relationship moves through four different stages. For a mentee to move from one stage to another, he/she must pass through a distinct transitional phase. These phases are 1) developmental, 2) consolidation, 3) separation and 4) redefinition" (p. 67). The description of each phase includes comments regarding its duration in terms of time, the main roles played by mentors, and also says something about the type of activities being carried out.

Bova and Phillips (1984) show a model called Developmental Stages of Mentoring. The model uses six general stages through which a mentoring relationship moves. They are entry, mutual building of trust, risk-taking, teaching of skills, professional standards, and dissolution.

According to Gehrke and Kay (1984) the relationships of mentoring pairs are developmental. Main areas of development identified were the growth of the professional and personal relationship between the mentor and the protégé.

Cranton (1992) describes the mentoring role and provides a brief description of the development of the relationship between the mentor and the mentee.

The mentor relationship is based on mutual interests, respect and liking. It usually includes a compatibility of learning style and personality type. The relationship can evolve into friendship as the educator/learner aspect of the connection is ended. Unfortunately, there is little research on the nature of the mentor role ... and even less is made of it in the practical adult education literature ... The educator [mentor] neither "instructs" nor simply makes the expressed needs, but rather works with the learner to move in directions that both choose. The mentor role is chosen by both participants ... Quite often, within institutionalized education, the mentor role has a clear-cut ending. However if there is an opportunity for continued interaction in more informal learning contexts such as community groups or working with graduate students in business or industrial working environments the mentor role will evolve into a collegial role. The educator remains the individual with more experience and background, but begins to learn from the learner and his or her expanded expertise or growth. Eventually, if it continues, the

relationship can become one of friends or colleagues, and the educator/learner roles are terminated. (p. 88)

### Summary

A review of the literature relevant to the general topic of mentoring was discussed in the first section of this chapter. The second part of the review focused on mentoring as it relates to the field of education and, in particular, to teacher induction programs.

This review described the mentoring principles, theory and opinions espoused by various authors and practitioners in the field. This material also provided a broad understanding of relevant material which was considered when developing the methodology for this study. In the next chapter this methodology is discussed.

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

#### Feasibility Discussions with Halton Board of Education

The Halton Board of Education, located in Ontario, Canada had designed and implemented a mentoring program for their first-year teachers. This program had been in operation for three and one-half years.

Meetings were held with Board officials to discuss the workings of the program. This provided for an opportunity to develop an indepth understanding of the Halton Board mentoring model and the feasibility of using it in this study. The results of this meeting were reviewed with Dr. Patricia Cranton of Brock University and it was agreed to proceed.

The first step involved the preparation of a proposal that would satisfy the requirements of this thesis and also the requirements of the Halton Board. The proposal was prepared and approved by the thesis review committee at Brock University, Faculty of Education, and also by the Halton Board of Education. In addition, the Board agreed to sponsor the study by providing support services and equipment.

#### Restatement of the Problem

The focus of this study was to identify and develop a description of the development of relationships between mentor and mentee teachers participating in the Halton Board

of Education "Partners in the Classroom" program (henceforth, the Program). Since this program had been in operation for three and one-half years, it therefore provided an opportunity to examine the development and changes in the relationships between mentoring pairs over time.

This is a retrospective longitudinal study. It is retrospective in the sense that study participants are asked to remember and describe their experience as a mentoring pair from the time that they began in the Program to the present time. The study is longitudinal because it is an examination of the changes and development of mentoring relationships over a three-year period.

#### Population Surveyed

It was determined that the most effective method of conducting the research was to carry out a descriptive survey of a random sample of eighteen mentoring pairs of teachers (survey participants) that had been in the Halton program. Table 1 illustrates the composition of the study population sample.

#### Selection of Subjects

Three mentoring pairs from each yearly group over the three-year period that the Program has been operating, were

**Table 1: Study Population Sample.**

School	Number of Pairs			Total
	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	
Elementary	3	3	3	9
Secondary	3	3	3	9
Total	6	6	6	18



randomly selected. This sample was further divided to provide representation from both the elementary and secondary school. Therefore a total of eighteen pairs were selected to participate, all of which provided first-year relationship data while twelve pairs provided data for the first and second year and six pairs provided information for a three-year period.

#### Survey Procedure, Data Collection and Recording

Potential survey participants were contacted by letter from the Board. This letter of invitation described the purpose of the study and the importance of their participation. Discussions were then held by telephone with the selected mentoring pairs, to confirm their participation, provide the details of the study and describe what would be expected in terms of their involvement. Arrangements were made personally to meet with each mentor and mentee and carry out an interview. The survey was conducted by personal interview to ensure the accuracy and integrity of data collected. Furthermore, each mentor and mentee was interviewed separately to encourage honest and open discussions and to ensure confidentiality of information. In return for their assistance, survey participants were told that they would receive a brief summary of the study results. The sponsors of this study, the Halton Board of Education, would receive a full report

containing a description of the methodology, analysis, conclusions and recommendations.

Interviews were carried out and discussions were tape recorded. Two participants did not want to be recorded, therefore handwritten notes were made. The tape recordings were then transcribed and analyzed. Because of defective equipment, results from three mentoring pairs were not recorded and therefore not included in the study. Therefore the study consisted of fifteen pairs.

#### Instrumentation

A questionnaire guideline was prepared and is contained in Appendix A.

The questionnaire contained two sections. Section A provided the interviewer with an opportunity to collect basic demographic information such as gender, current teaching assignment, length of service, date of participation in the Halton program and how the participants felt about the mentoring experience. Section B was designed to allow the interviewer to probe and obtain important information relating to the development and character of the mentor-mentee relationship over time.

To ensure that the questions would generate adequate and appropriate responses, several test interviews were conducted. Since there were no difficulties encountered with

comprehension, no changes needed to be made to the questionnaire.

### Data Analysis

Transcripts of each mentor and mentee teacher were reviewed and summarized. Comments made by each individual teacher about the relationship with their partner was compared and assessed to ensure consistency and accuracy of interview data. Where it was determined that there was a discrepancy between information reported a follow-up discussion for clarification was undertaken.

Data from each interview were then consolidated with those of the mentoring partner to provide a mentoring pair summary.

The information contained in each mentoring pair summary was examined, grouped and tabulated to ensure ease of analysis.

Analyzed information from each of the mentoring pair summaries was then compared and consolidated.

This information was then analyzed to identify important data patterns.

Analytical results from Section B of the interview were expressed in terms of percentages of the survey group responding and graphed over time to identify changes, patterns and trends in mentoring relationships during the three-year period.

### Assumptions and Limitations

In this section an attempt has been made to describe some of the important variables that must be recognized while conducting this study.

Several variables could threaten the internal validity of the study. They included:

- the method of pairing mentors and mentees;
- cross-gender relationships between mentor and mentee;
- differences between mentor and mentee of opinion, perspectives and understanding as to the purposes and objectives of the relationship;
- differences among participating pairs' school climate;
- differences between pairs regarding prior professional development and involvement in mentoring;
- that after the second year of teaching it is the policy of the Halton Board to offer the beginning teacher a permanent contract;
- the sample size was relatively small; and
- the Halton Program may be considered to be an administratively contrived staff development program (Hargreaves, 1989).

Mentors and mentees were assigned to each other by the Halton Program administrators. There was no opportunity for

a natural selection process to take place. Therefore, major differences in philosophy of education, personal attitudes, values, morales, and other personality factors could create barriers that could influence the development and effectiveness of the relationship.

In cross-gender pairing of mentor-mentees, male mentors may have difficulties understanding and responding to the needs, concerns and issues of a female mentee. The converse may also be true. This lack of understanding could affect the development of the relationship and therefore, influence the study results.

The climate of the school where each pair is teaching could have a dramatic effect on the development and operation of the relationship with each other. One pair could be teaching in a school that has an open, collegial collaborative culture where help, trust and openness are encouraged. On the other hand, a pair may come from a school where teachers teach alone, behind closed doors, rarely conversing with other teachers, shying away from collaboration and possible criticism (Hargreaves, 1989).

A lack of commitment by all parties involved in the program could be perceived as proof of a program contrived by administration to satisfy legislation or other political needs rather than those of the beginning teacher. This kind of situation would have a major effect on the outcome of the study.

The likelihood that differences in school climate would have a substantial affect on the development of the relationship between mentor and mentee and the study results was great.

If either one or both individuals had prior experience in the mentoring process it was possible that the relationship could develop faster and be more effective than that of other non-experienced pairs in the population that was being studied.

After two years of successful teaching the beginning teacher is offered a permanent contract. It is possible that the mentee teacher, after obtaining this contract, could develop a sense of security that may affect the relationship with the mentor. If this was true then the findings of the study might also be affected.

The size of the sample is probably large enough to satisfy the purpose of this study. A greater degree of confidence in the study results could be achieved if a larger sample had been used.

The results of this study might also have certain limitations for application by other boards and organizations because of the differences in cultures, philosophies, objectives and goals when compared to those of the Halton Board.

In this chapter, the methodology of the study was discussed and related specifically to the purposes of this research in terms of the:

- survey;
- selection of participants;
- survey procedures;
- data collection and recording;
- instrumentation;
- data analysis; and
- assumptions and limitations.

In the next chapter the results of this study are discussed.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Survey data were reviewed and analyzed. The results of this analysis are described in this chapter. The purpose of the overall study and this analysis was to identify and provide a description of the stages of development of the relationship between mentors and mentees participating in the Halton Program. These results are discussed under the following headings:

- demographic information;
- relationship profile;
- types of issues discussed;
- development of the mentor/mentee relationship;
- and
- the changing role of the mentor.

### Demographic Information

Information regarding the characteristics of the survey participants was obtained. Of the thirty participants:

- twenty-two were female and eight were male teachers;
- ten were female mentors and five were male mentors;
- ten mentoring pairs were female;
- three mentoring pairs were male;
- two mentoring pairs were male, female;



- eight pairs taught at the elementary school level;
- seven pairs taught at the secondary school level; and
- the mentor teachers possessed an average of fifteen years experience.

### Relationship Profile

Participants were asked to provide background information regarding the mentoring relationship, such as:

- how the relationship was initiated;
- whether they knew each other beforehand;
- where they held their meetings;
- which one of the pair usually initiated the meetings;
- whether their meetings were scheduled ad hoc or on an as-needed basis;
- how often they meet with each other; and
- whether the relationship is still intact.

Mentors were also asked if they are currently mentoring other teachers and if they would like to mentor another first-year teacher.

### Establishing the Mentoring Relationship

Mentoring pairs were asked how their relationship was initiated and whether they knew each other before that time.

Figure 1 is a pictorial summary illustrating the following analyses.

Sixty-seven percent of the study group reported that they had been assigned to each other by either the school principal or vice-principal while thirty-three percent were assigned by a department head.

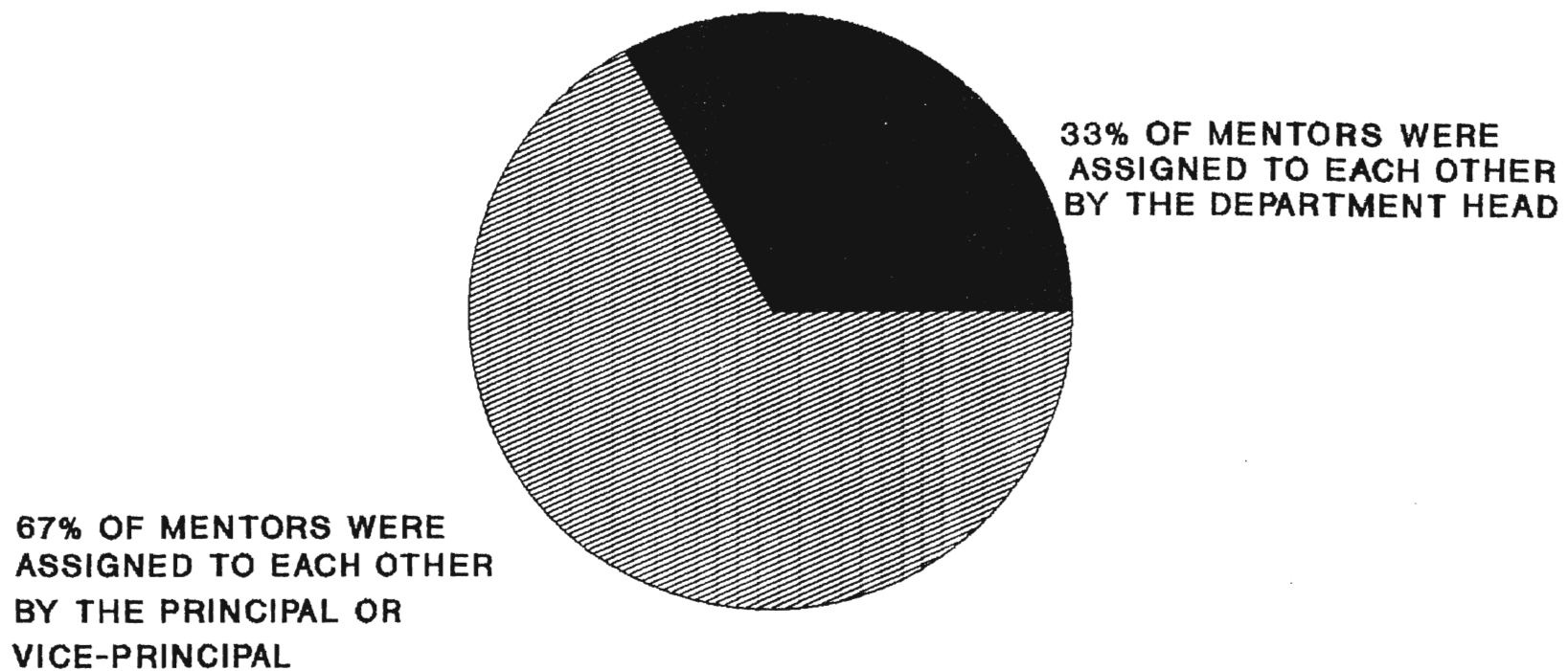
Forty percent of all mentoring pairs knew each other prior to their assignment.

Seventy-three percent of the mentoring pairs claimed that the mentor and the first-year teacher did not know each other prior to being assigned. Of this group where mentoring pairs did not know each other, eighteen percent of the mentors had volunteered for the assignment. Twenty-seven percent of the participating pairs reported that they knew each other prior to the mentoring assignment. Of the group that knew each other, seventy-five percent of these mentors volunteered for the assignment. These results are shown in Figure 2.

#### Location of Mentoring Meetings

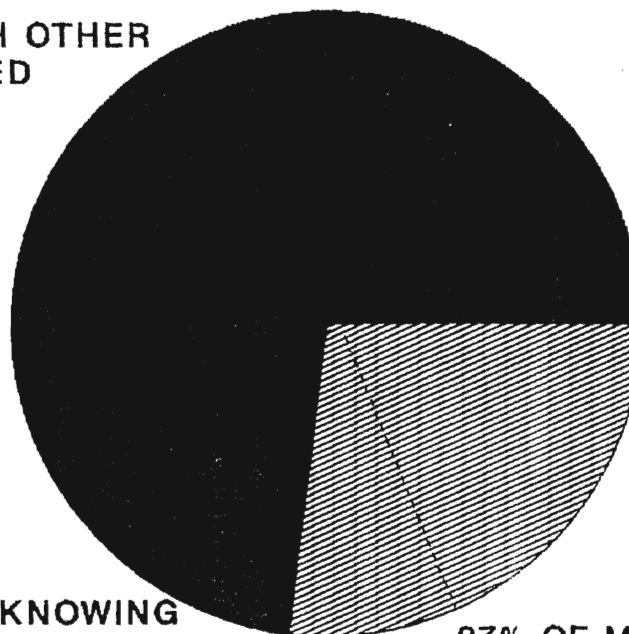
Study participants reported that they held mentoring meetings in the following locations and frequency:

- their classroom by thirteen pairs;
- the staff lunchroom by thirteen pairs;
- a library room or study room by six pairs; and
- in the hall by three pairs.



**Figure 1. Assignment of Mentoring Pairs.**

73% DID NOT KNOW EACH OTHER  
PRIOR TO BEING ASSIGNED



OF PAIRS KNOWING  
EACH OTHER 75%  
VOLUNTEERED FOR  
THE ASSIGNMENT

OF THE PAIRS NOT KNOWING  
EACH OTHER 18% OF THE  
MENTORS VOLUNTEERED

27% OF MENTORING PAIRS  
KNEW EACH OTHER PRIOR  
TO BEING ASSIGNED

40% OF ALL MENTORING PAIRS  
KNEW EACH OTHER PRIOR  
TO ASSIGNMENT

**Figure 2.** Knowledge of Each Other Prior to Being Assigned.

The location of meetings did not change over the three-year period.

#### Initiation of the Mentoring Meeting

Participants were asked whether the mentor or the first-year teacher usually initiated the mentoring meetings. It was determined that of the mentoring pairs;

- sixty percent took equal responsibility;
- thirty-three percent left it to the mentee; and
- seven percent were initiated by the mentor.

#### Meeting Scheduled, Ad hoc, Or As Needed

Mentoring pairs were asked whether their meetings were scheduled, held on an ad hoc basis or as needed.

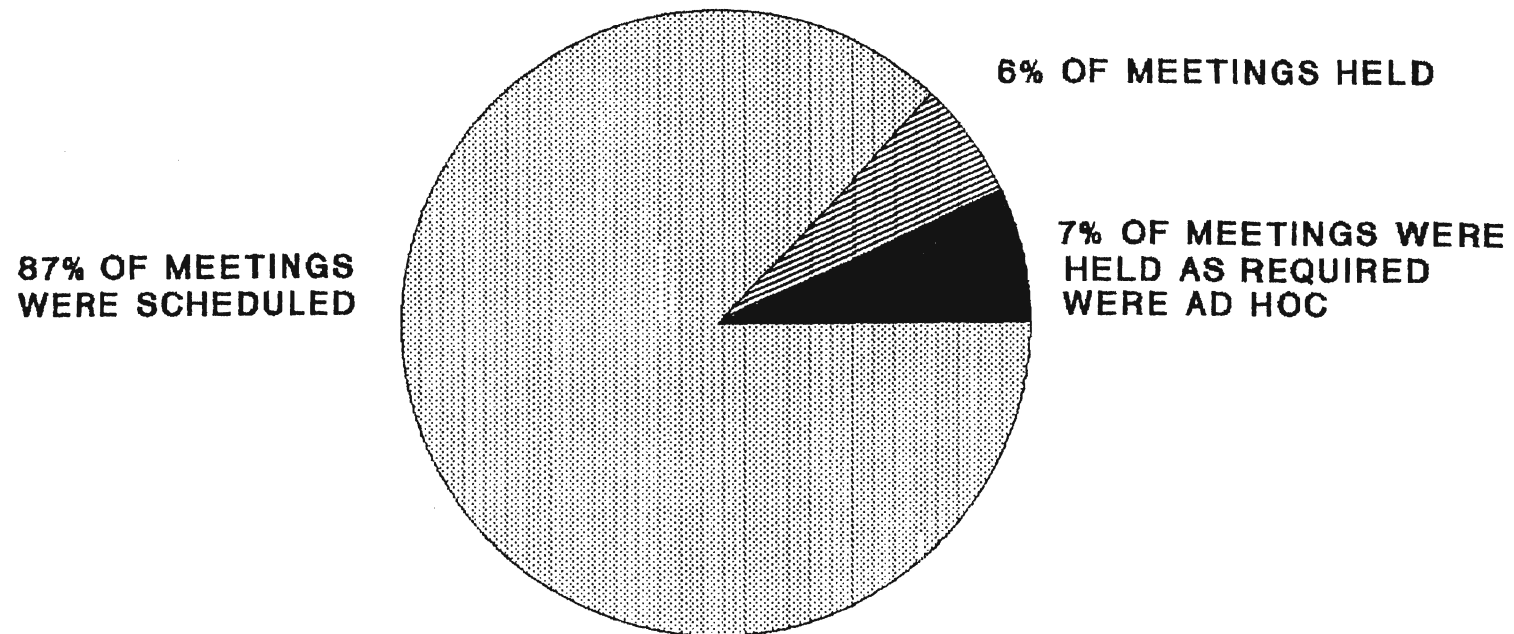
As shown in Figure 3, during the first half of Year One it was that the majority of meetings held by:

- eighty-seven percent of mentoring pairs were scheduled;
- seven percent of mentoring pairs were ad hoc;
- six percent of mentoring pairs were held when needed.

During the second half of Year One, as shown in Figure 4, the majority of meetings held by:

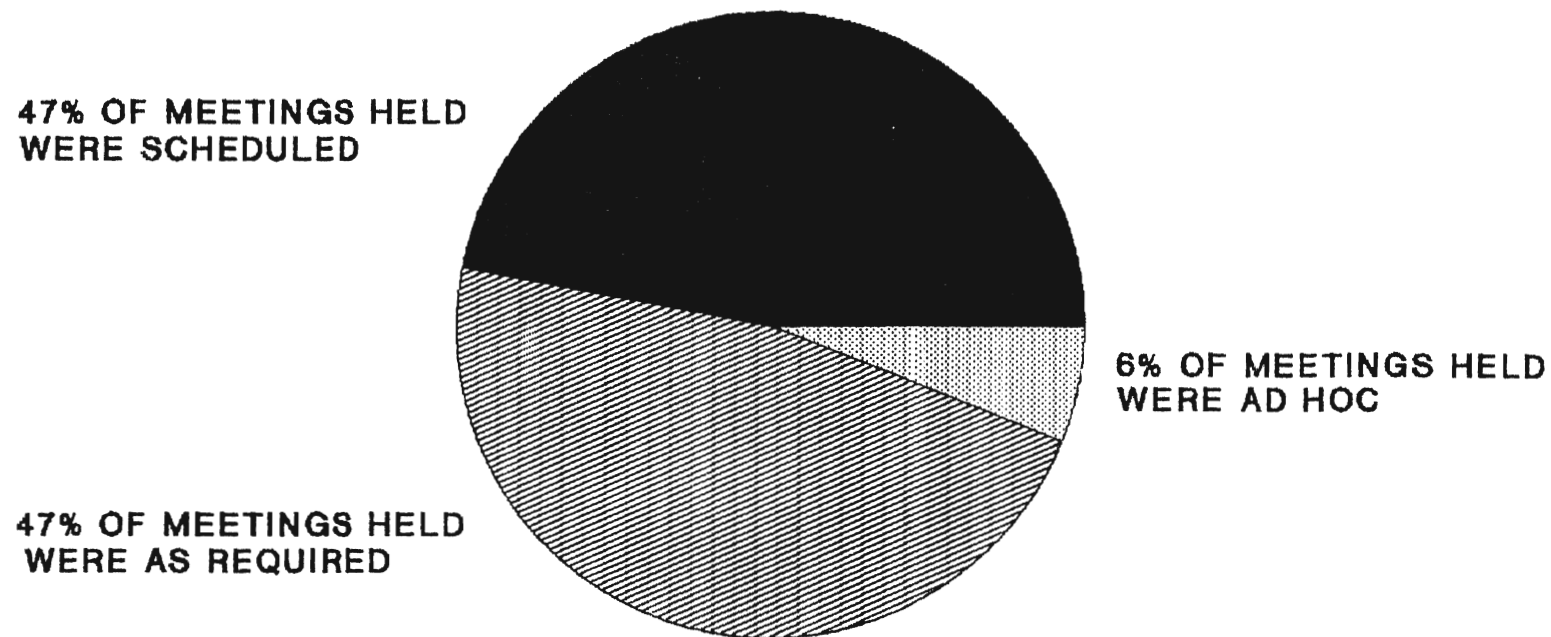
- forty-seven percent of mentoring pairs were scheduled;
- six percent of mentoring pairs were ad hoc; and

**First Year: September to January**



**Figure 3. Arranging The Mentoring Meetings .**

**First Year: September to January**



**Figure 4. Arranging The Mentoring Meetings.**

- forty-seven percent of mentoring pairs were held as needed.

During Years Two and Three the majority of meetings as shown in Figure 5 held by:

- twenty-five percent of mentoring pairs were scheduled; and
- seventy-five percent of mentoring pairs were held as needed.

#### Frequency of Meetings Held by Mentoring Pairs

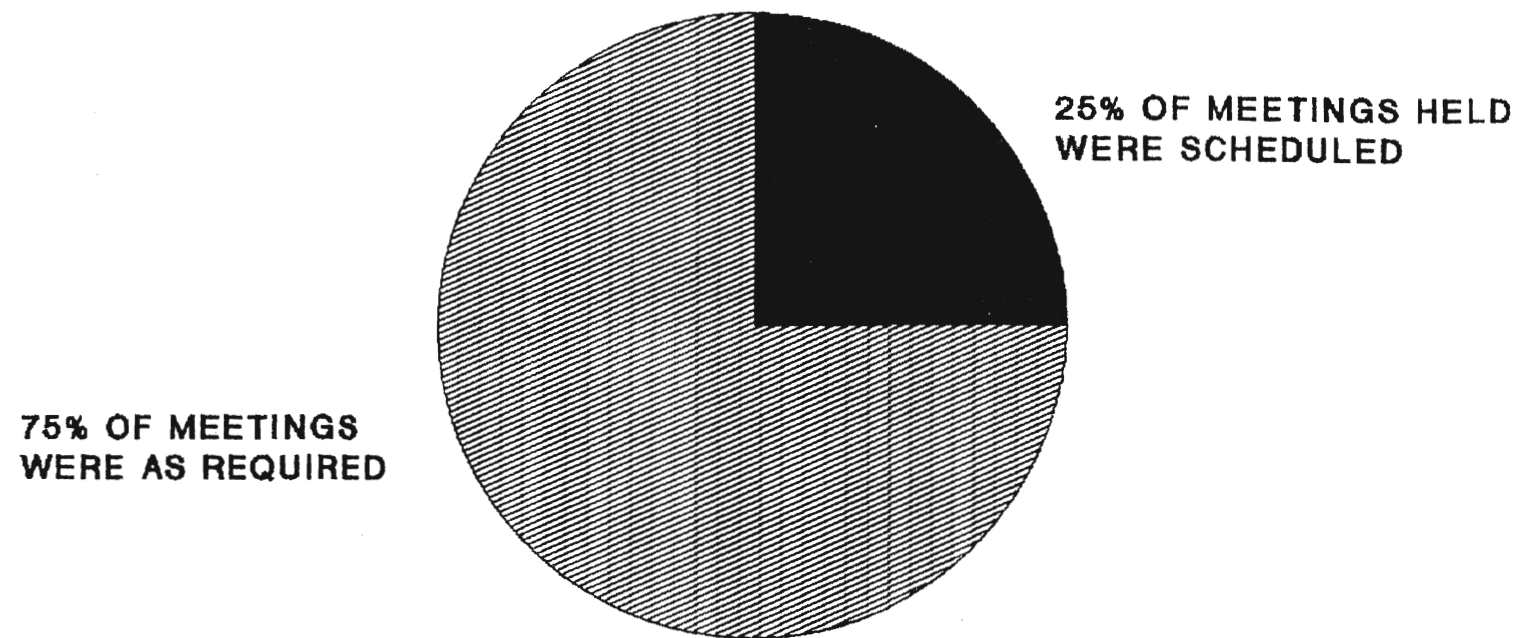
Participants in the study group were asked to indicate how often they met with their mentoring partner.

During the first half of Year One, as shown in Figure 6 sixty-six percent of mentoring pairs met daily and thirty-four percent met weekly. As shown in Figure 7 the second half of the first year of teaching, forty percent of mentoring pairs continued to meet daily while twenty-seven percent met weekly and thirty-three percent met on a monthly basis.

During Year Two, ten percent of mentoring partners were still meeting daily while those meeting weekly increased to thirty percent and pairs meeting monthly rose to forty percent. Ten percent of the group reported that they rarely met, while another ten percent had stopped meeting. This analysis is shown in Figure 8.

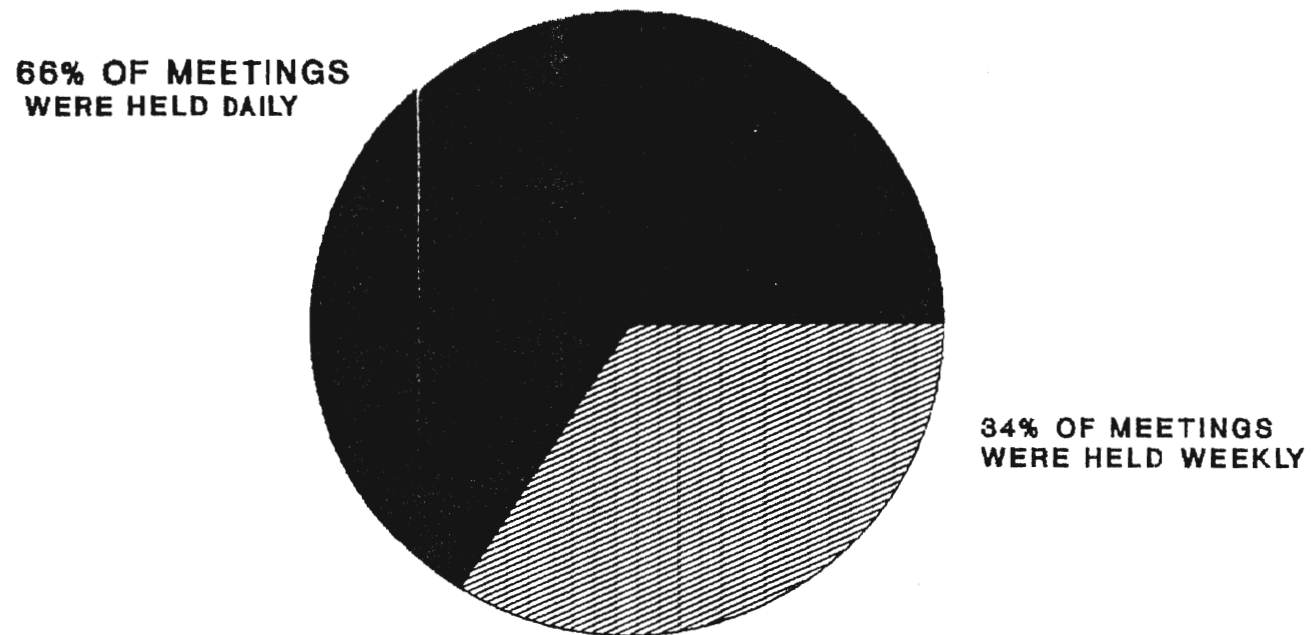


**Year Two and Three**



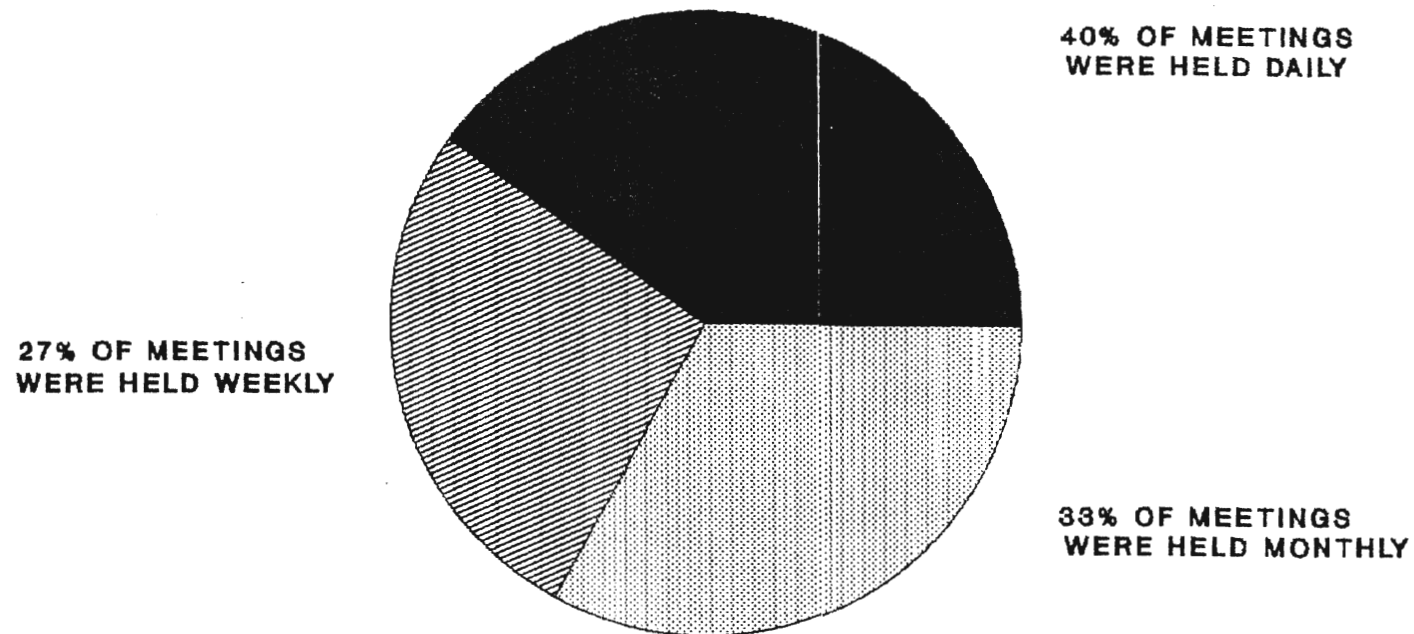
**Figure 5. Arranging The Mentoring Meetings.**

**First Year: September to January**



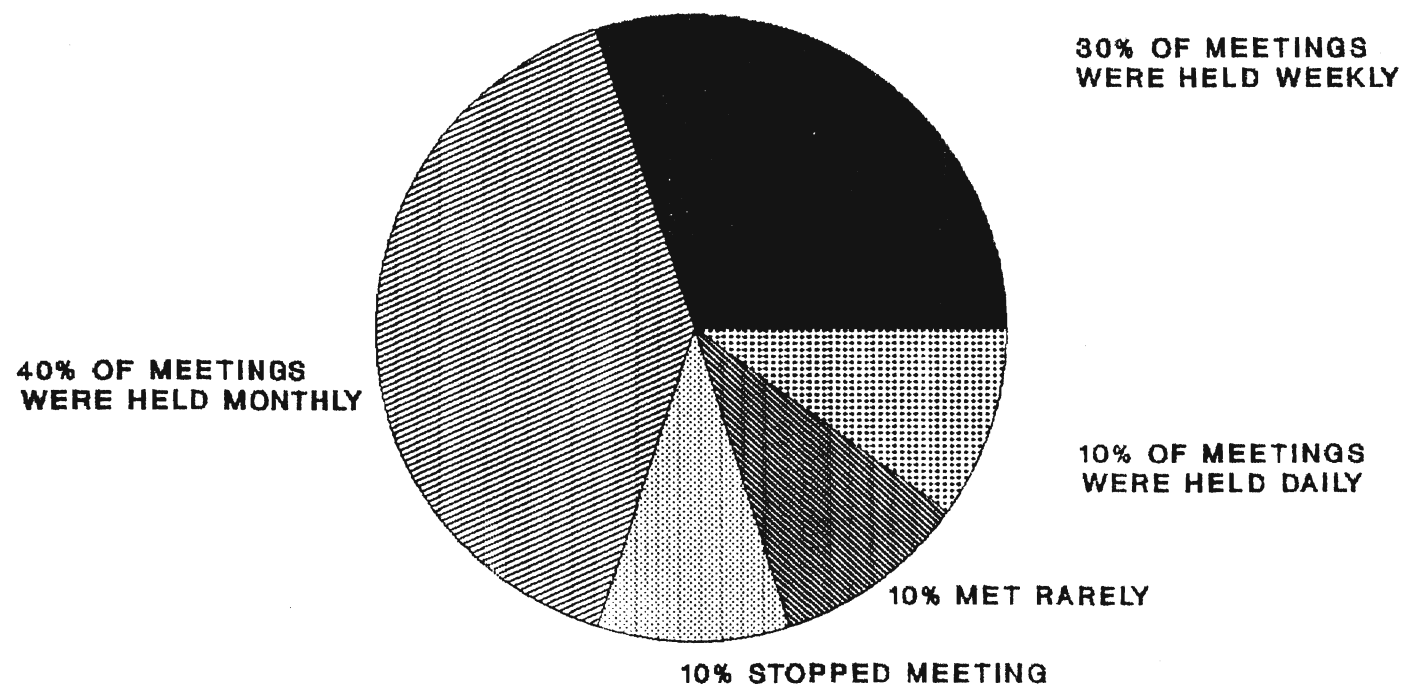
**Figure 6. Frequency of Meetings Held by Mentoring Pairs.**

**First Year: January to June**



**Figure 7. Frequency of Meetings Held by Mentoring Pairs.**

Year Two



**Figure 8.** Frequency of Meetings Held by Mentoring Pairs .

Year Three

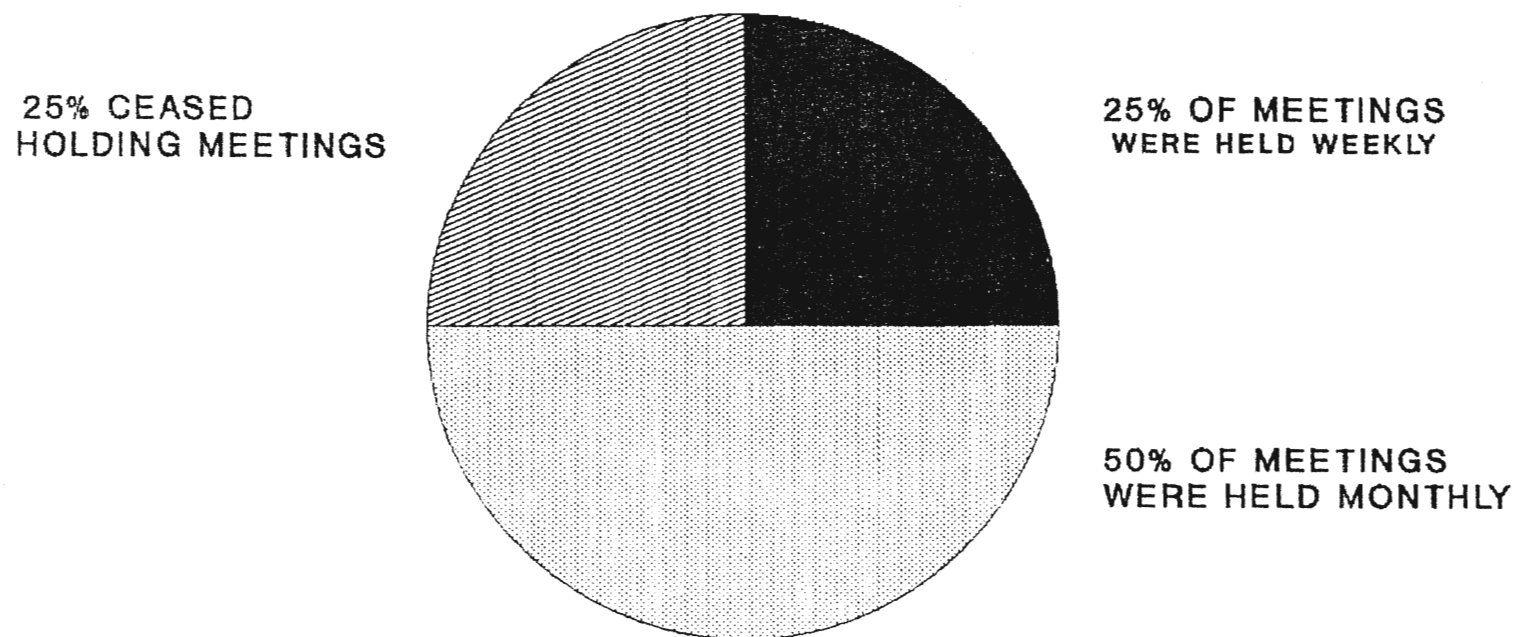


Figure 9. Frequency of Meetings Held by Mentoring Pairs.

In Year Three twenty-five percent of mentoring partners (as shown in Figure 9) indicated that while they often met daily, they met at least once per week. Fifty percent met monthly and twenty-five percent had stopped meeting completely. Thus over time, the frequency of the meetings had decreased.

### Types of Issues Discussed

The study group participants were asked what types of issues were discussed amongst mentoring pairs. For the purpose of this analysis and ease of data interpretation, the nineteen issues identified have been assigned to three main categories and are shown in Table 2. They are orientational, instructional and professional development issues.

### Orientation Issues

Orientation issues included the following:

- availability of supplies and resources;
- introduction to other staff;
- school administrative policies and procedures;
- and
- organization of the classroom.

School administrative policies and procedures were discussed by sixty-six percent of the mentoring pairs during late August and early September, and dropped to six percent

Table 2. Issues Discussed by Mentoring Pairs

<u>Issues Discussed</u>	<u>% of Survey Group During</u>				
	<u>Aug./Sept.</u>	<u>1st Year Oct./Dec.</u>	<u>Jan./June</u>	<u>2nd Year Sept./June</u>	<u>3rd Year Sept./June</u>
<u>Orientation</u>					
Supplies and Resources Availability	46	6	20	10	25
Introduction to other staff	20	0	0	0	0
School Administrative Procedures	66	6	6	0	0
Organization of the classroom	60	0	0	0	0
<u>Instructional</u>					
Classroom Management	73	93	60	20	25
Curriculum Planning, Design, Setting Objectives	66	60	6	10	25
Student Evaluation	26	46	12	10	25
Report Card Writing	6	46	6	10	0
Parent-Teacher Interviews and Relations	6	46	0	10	0
Validation and Exchange of Ideas	6	0	40	30	25
Peer Coaching, Critiquing of Teaching Skills	6	6	6	40	50
<u>Professional Development</u>					
Time Management	34	20	6	0	0
Management of Emotional Frustration and Stress	6	0	12	20	25
School, Board and Community Climate	46	66	20	0	0
Effective Working Relations with Other Staff	6	24	0	0	0
Potential Professional Development Activities	0	0	6	40	50

during the balance of Year One.

While organization of the classroom was of concern to sixty percent of the study partners during the first part of Year One, the issue was not reported as a discussion item after that time.

Similarly, introduction to other staff was of interest to twenty percent of mentoring pairs during the early part of Year One but not reported as a discussion item after that time.

Discussions regarding supplies and resource availability were reported by forty-six percent of participants during the early part of Year One, sixty percent during October through December, ten percent during Year Two and twenty-five percent during Year Three.

#### Instructional Issues Discussed

Instructional issues discussed included:

- classroom management;
- curriculum planning and design, and setting objectives;
- student evaluation;
- report card writing;
- parent teacher interviews and relations;
- validation and exchange of ideas; and
- peer coaching and critiquing of teaching skills.



Classroom management was reported as a discussion issue by seventy-three percent of participating partners during the early part of Year One, rising to ninety-three percent from October through December and falling to sixty percent during the balance of this year.

This issue continued to be of interest and discussed during Years Two and Three by twenty and twenty-five percent of participants, respectively.

Discussion issues relating to planning, design, development of curriculum and setting objectives were reported by sixty-six percent of mentoring pairs during the early part of Year One dropping only slightly to sixty percent from October through December. Those discussing this issue were reduced to six percent during the balance of Year One, followed by ten percent and twenty-five percent during Years Two and Three, respectively. Student evaluation, report card writing and parent-teacher interviews and relations followed a similar pattern of interest as a discussion item by survey participants. Little interest in discussing these issues was reported during the early part of the year. The number of participants discussing these issues from October through December rose to forty-six percent. Few discussions of these issues were reported during the second half of Year One, and Years Two and Three.

Issues relating to validation and exchange of teaching and programming ideas received little attention during the

first half of Year One. During the second half however, this issue was reported as discussed by forty percent of participating pairs. Continued discussion was reported in the second year by thirty percent and twenty-five percent during the third year.

Peer coaching critiquing of teaching skills, while of little interest as a discussion issue during Year One increased substantially in subsequent years. Forty percent of mentoring pairs reported discussions in this area during Year Two and fifty percent during Year Three.

#### Professional Development Issues

Professional development issues discussed included the following items:

- time management;
- management of emotional frustration and stress;
- school, board, and community climate;
- effective working relations with other staff;
- and
- potential professional development activities.

Time management was an issue discussed by thirty-two percent of mentoring pairs during the first part of the year. The number discussing this issue reduced to twenty percent of the study group from October through December of Year One and to six percent from January through June of

that year. Participants did not report discussion of this issue during Years Two and Three.

Management of frustration and stress was reported as a topic of discussion by six percent of mentoring pairs during the early part of the first year. There were no reports of this issue being discussed during October through December of the first year, but the number increased to twelve percent from January to June and rising again to twenty percent during the second year, to twenty-five percent during third the year.

School, board and community climate was of great interest during Year One. In the early part of Year One, this issue was discussed by forty-six percent of mentoring pairs, by sixty-six percent from October through December, and by twenty percent during the balance of the school Year One. This issue was not reported as a point of discussion during Years Two and Three.

Developing effective working relations was an issue discussed by six percent during the early part of Year One and by twenty-four percent from October through December. This issue was not reported as an issue of discussion after that time.

Potential professional development activities was not an item of discussion during the first half of Year One. Six percent of the study participants discussed this issue

during the second half of Year One, increasing during Year Two to forty percent and Year Three to fifty percent.

#### Development of Relationships Between Mentors and Mentees

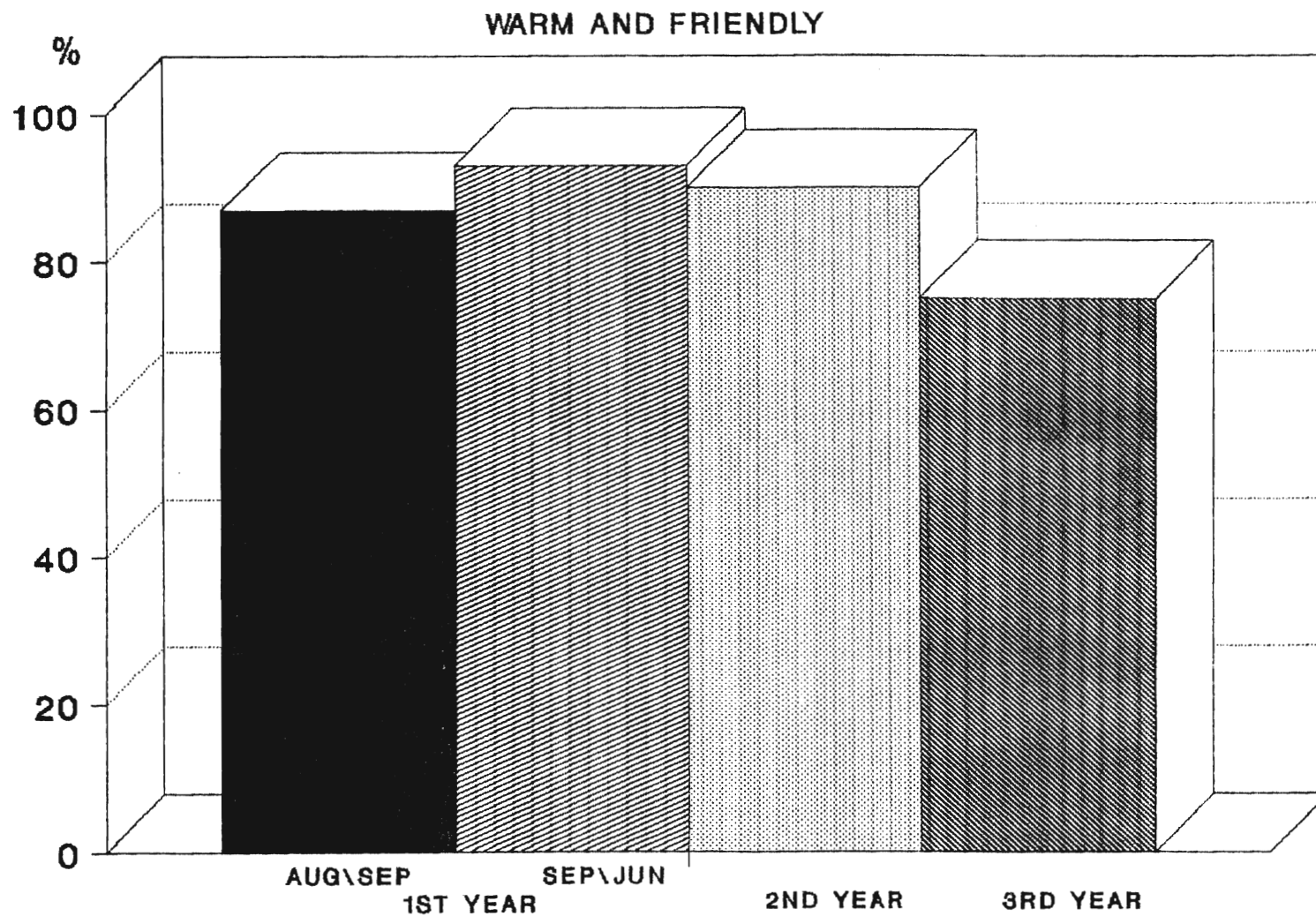
Each mentor and mentee was asked to describe their relationship during the early part of the year according to a given set of relationship categories, and how the character of the relationship had changed since that time. Information was collected and placed into the following relationship categories:

- warm and friendly;
- professional;
- collegial;
- paternalistic; and
- peer.

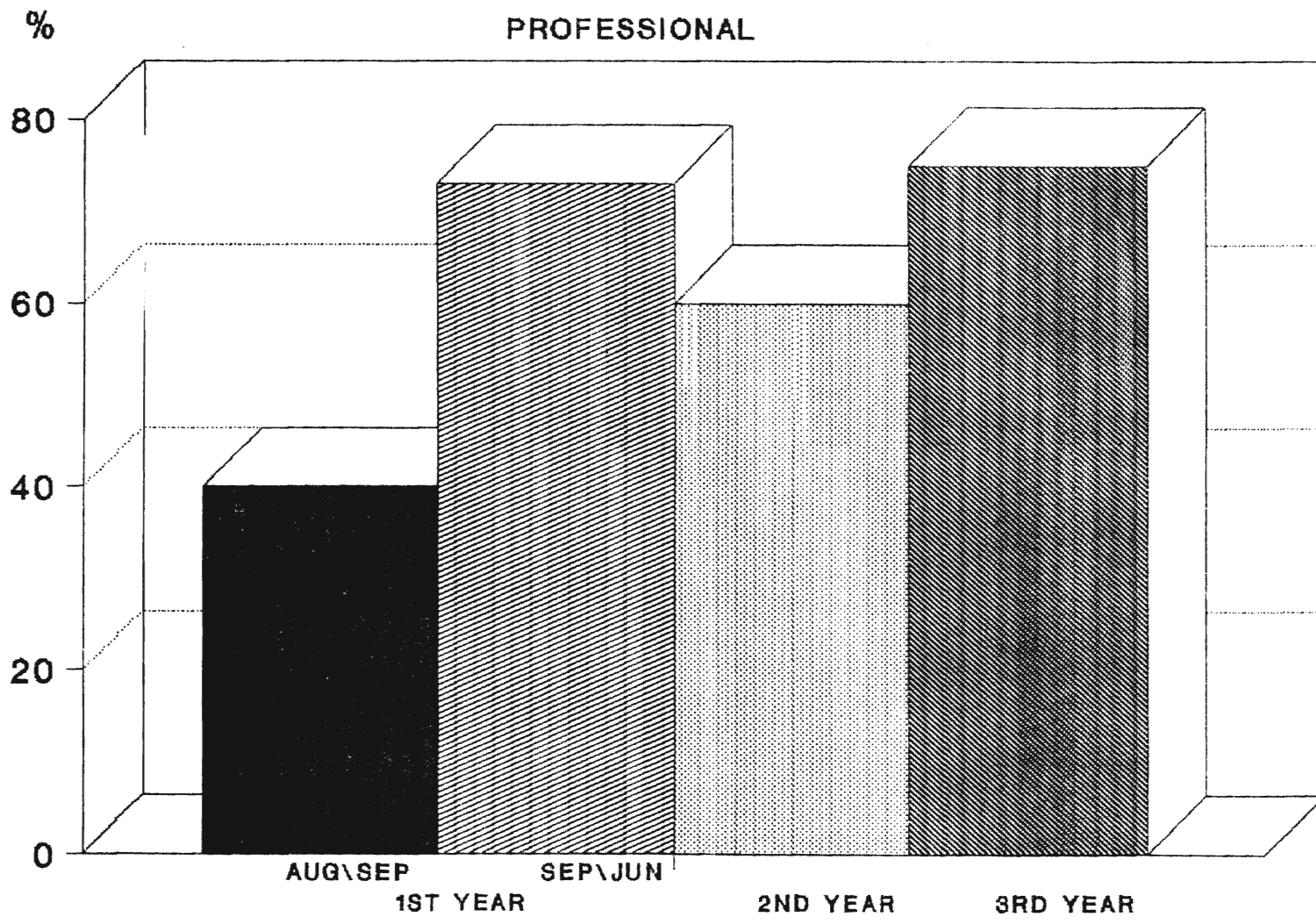
Data from each interview were not limited to placement into any one category. Interview data were evaluated, summarized and presented in Figures 10-15.

Warm and friendly relationships between mentor and mentee teachers were reported by sixty-seven percent of surveyed teachers during the first part of Year One increasing to ninety-three percent during the balance of that school year.

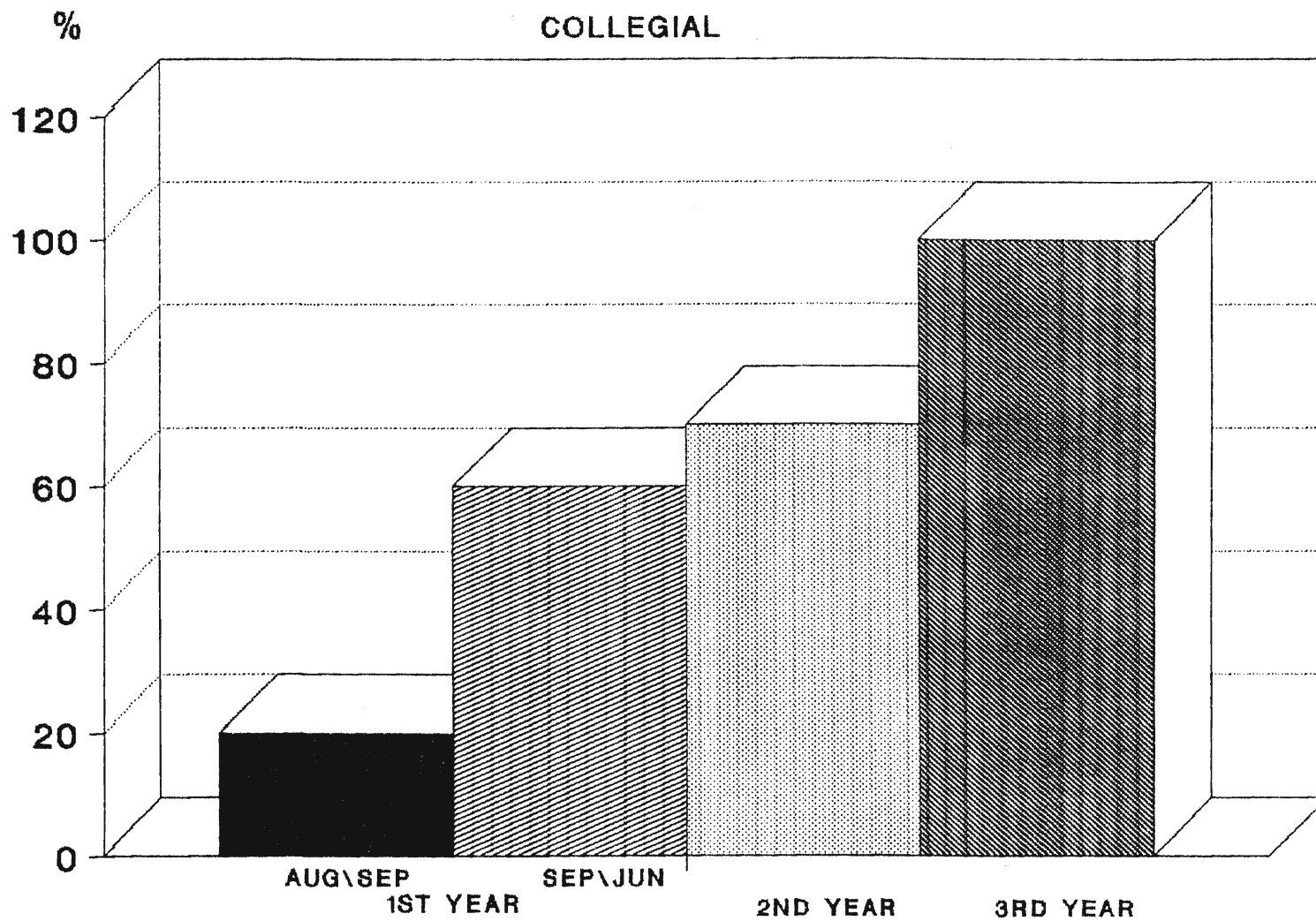
Ninety percent of mentoring pairs described their second-year relationship as a warm and friendly relationship followed by seventy-five percent in Year Three.



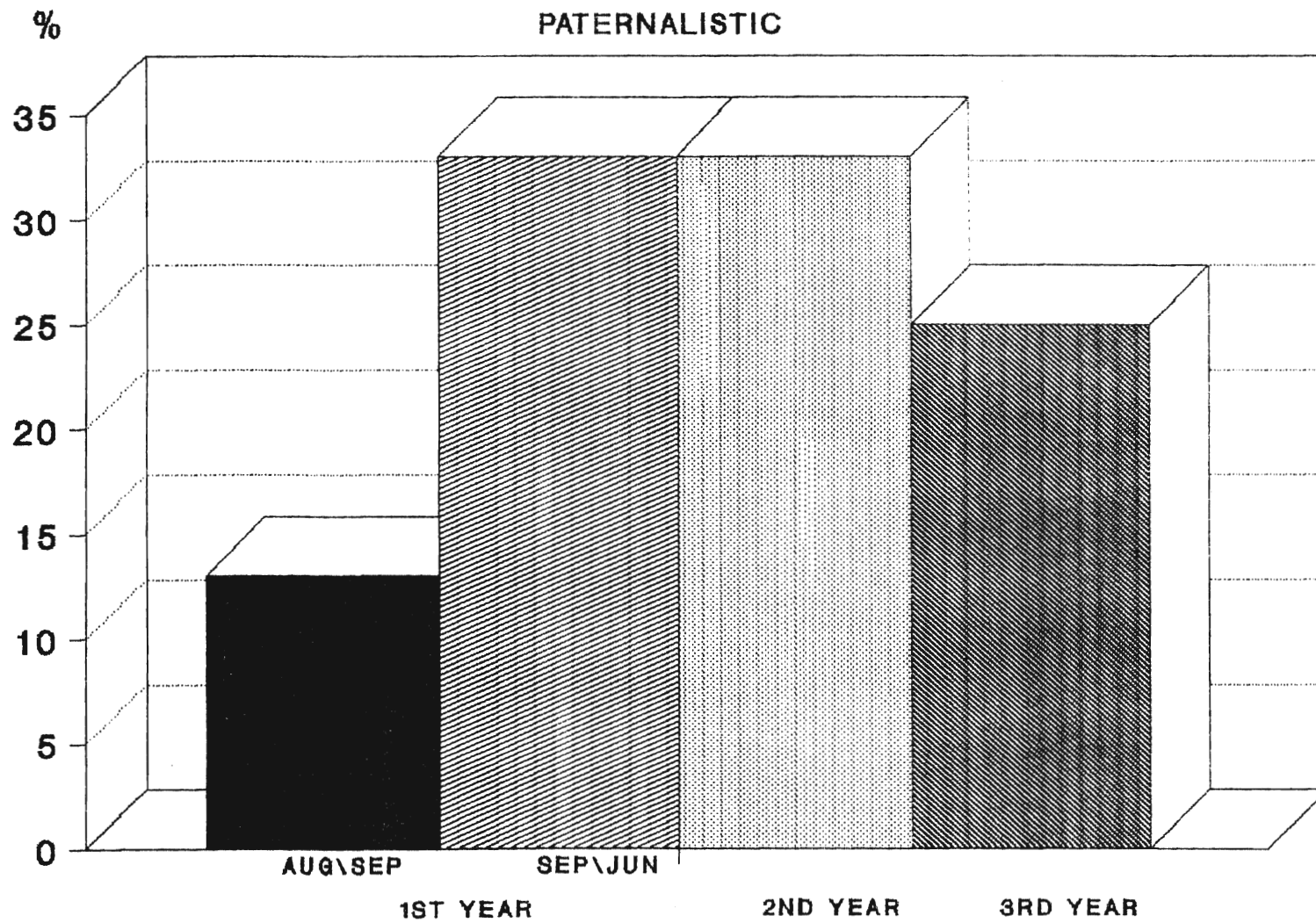
**Figure 10.** Development of the Relationship Between Mentors and Mentees.



**Figure 11.** Development of the Relationship Between Mentors and Mentees.

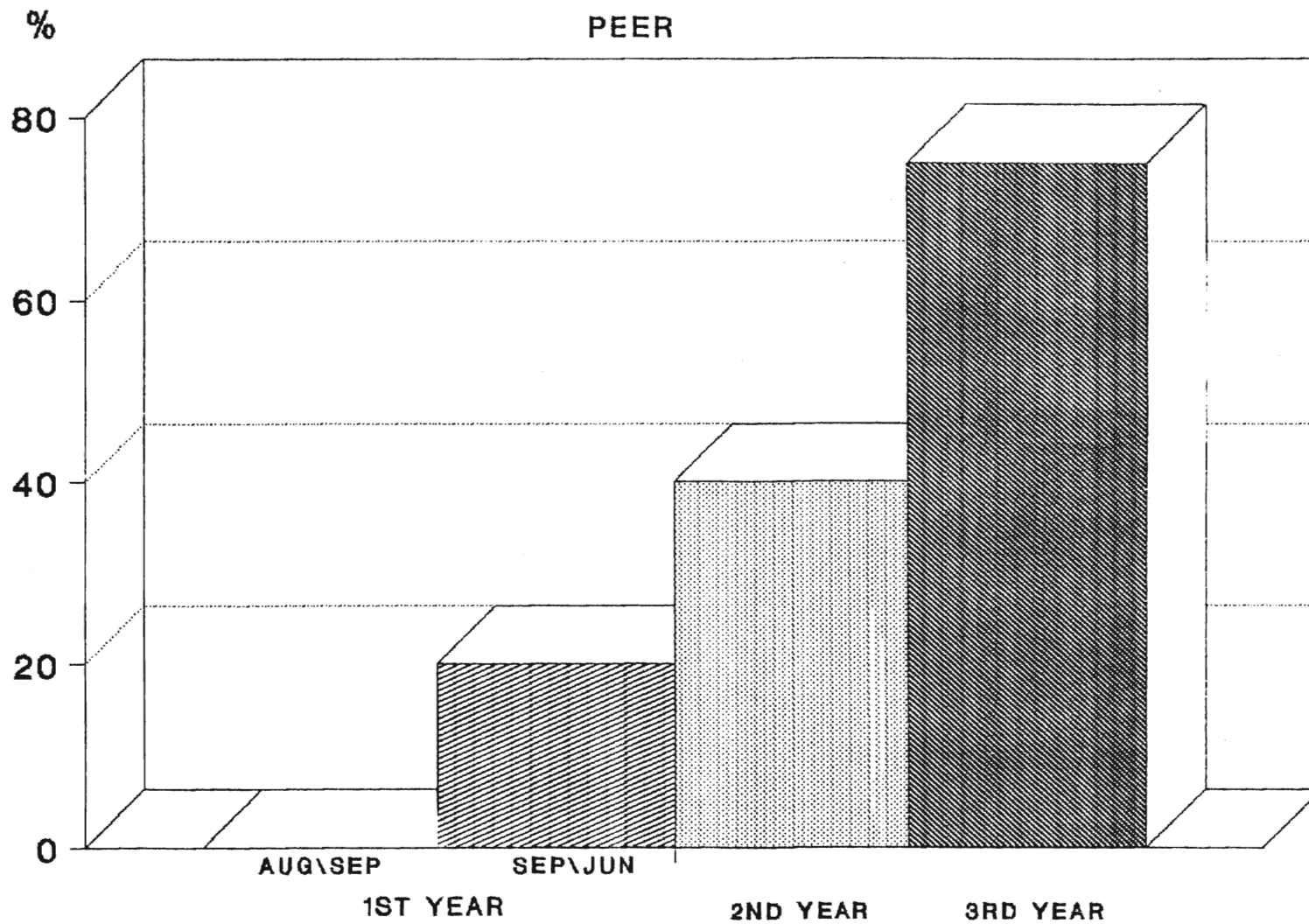


**Figure 12.** Development of the Relationship Between Mentors and Mentees.

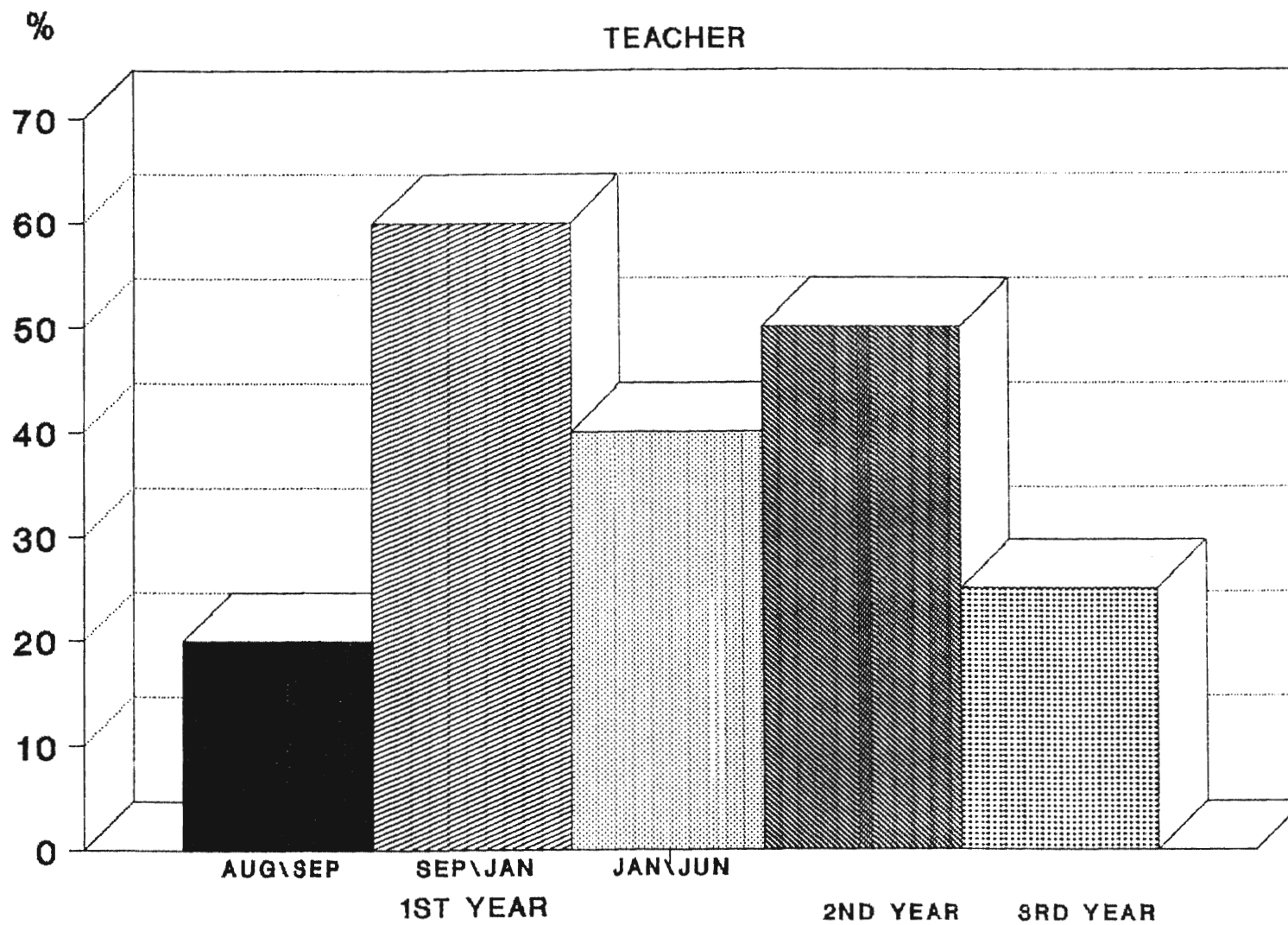


**Figure 13.** Development of the Relationship Between Mentors and Mentees.





**Figure 14. Development of the Relationship Between Mentors and Mentees.**



**Figure 15.** The Changing Role of the Mentor Teacher Over a Three-Year Period.

Forty percent of the study group characterized their relationship as having a professional component during the first part of Year One. This percentage increased to seventy-three percent during the balance of the first year and in the second year of the relationship, reduced to sixty percent followed by an increase to seventy-five percent during Year Three.

Only twenty percent considered their relationship to be collegial during the first part of Year One. During the balance of that year, an increase to sixty percent occurred. This percentage increased to seventy percent in second-year relationships and one hundred percent in third-year relationships.

Thirteen percent of the participants reported a paternalistic relationship during Year One. The number of paternalistic relationships increased to thirty-three percent during the balance of the first year and throughout the second year. Paternalistic relationships reported were reduced to twenty-five percent of the mentoring pairs during the third year.

None of the participants felt that a peer relationship existed during the first part of Year One. Thirty-three percent of the group indicated that a peer relationship had developed by the end of the first year. This percentage increased significantly in the second year to forty percent and again in the third year to seventy-five percent.

### The Changing Role of the Mentor

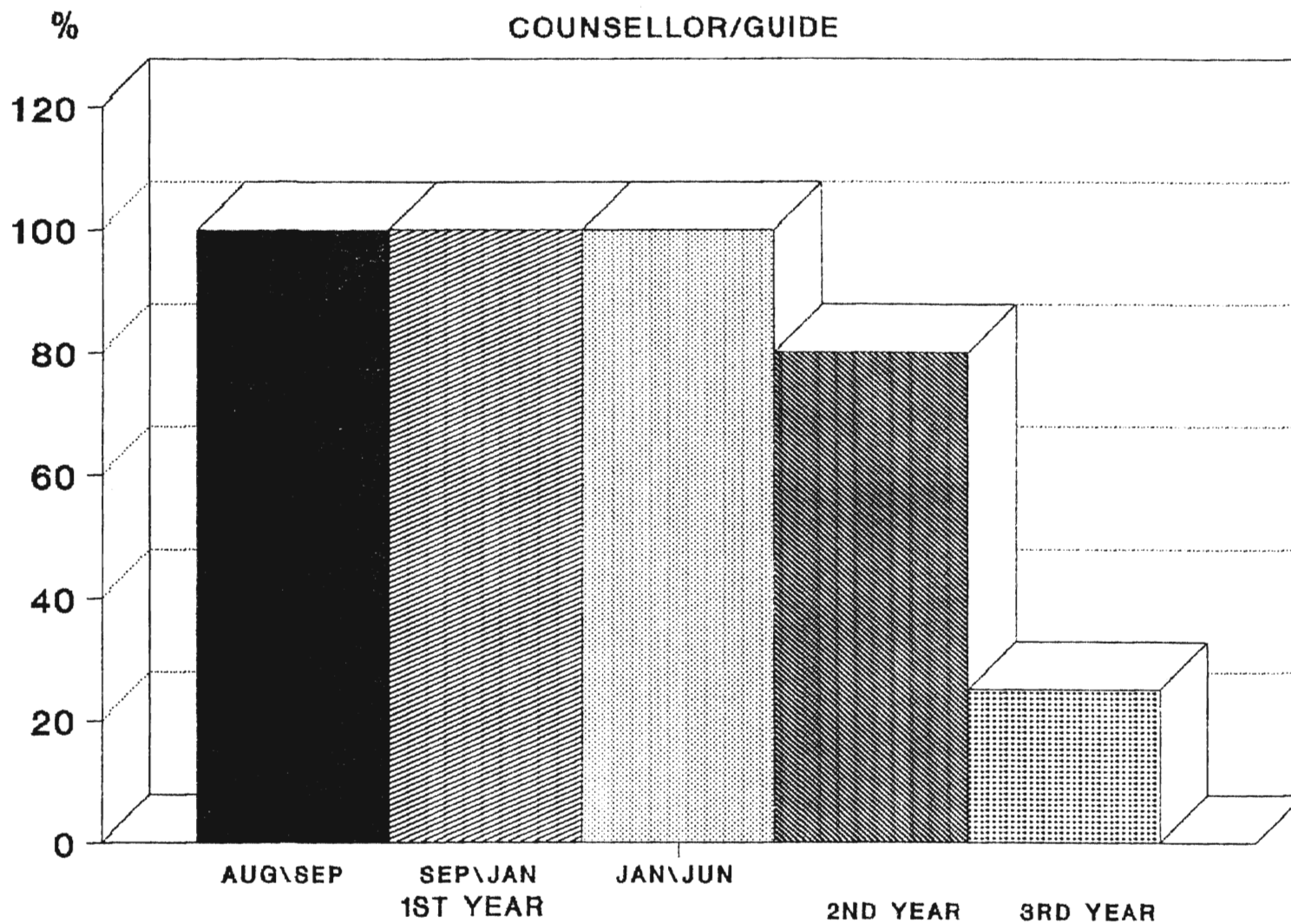
Information was collected according to specific categories regarding the role that was played by the mentor and how that role changed over time.

The role categories were:

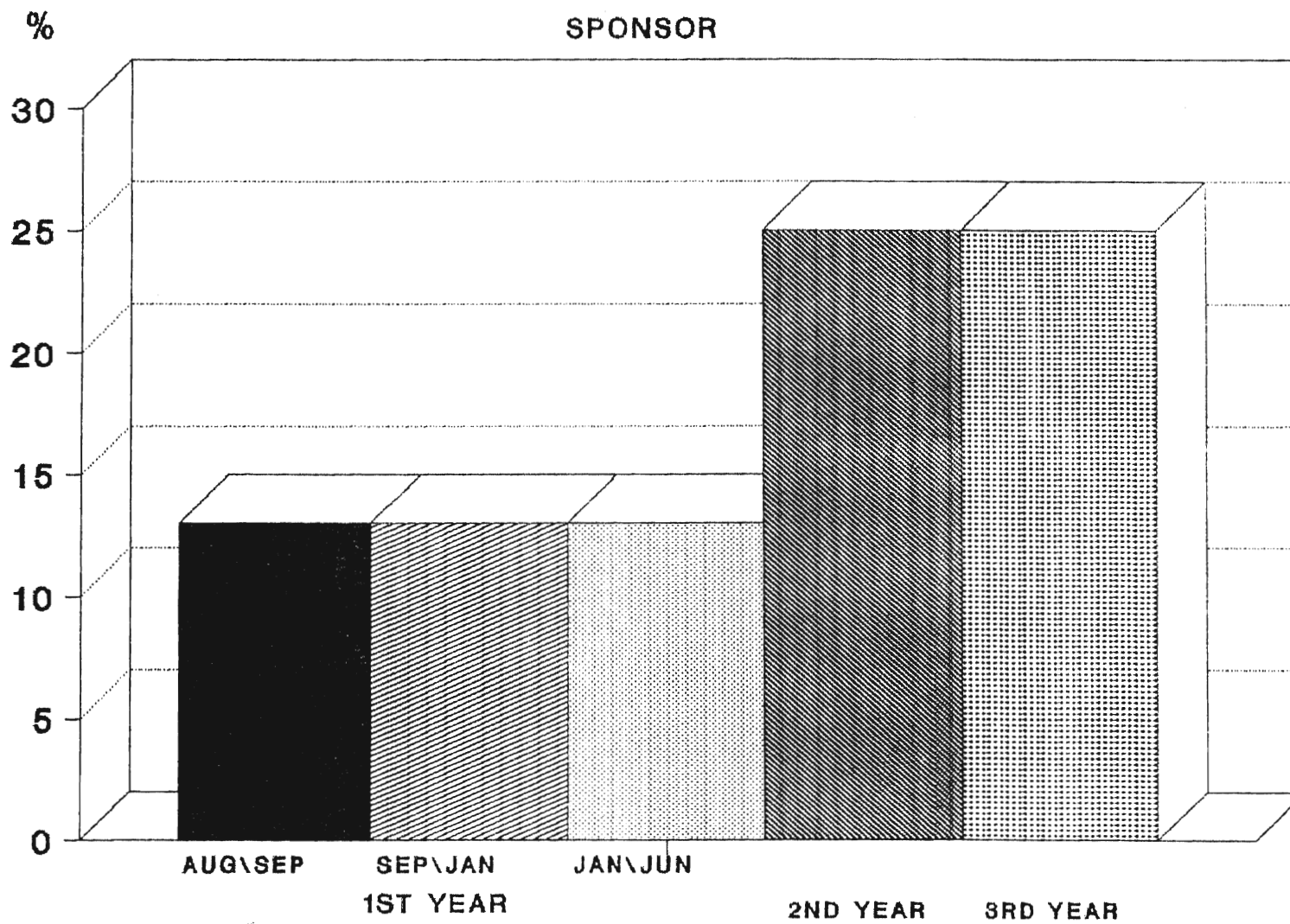
- teaching;
- guiding and coaching;
- counselling;
- sponsoring;
- role modelling;
- validating;
- motivation;
- protecting; and
- facilitating.

The results of this analysis are shown in Figures 16-22. Data for each category were expressed as a percentage of occurrences reported during each time period.

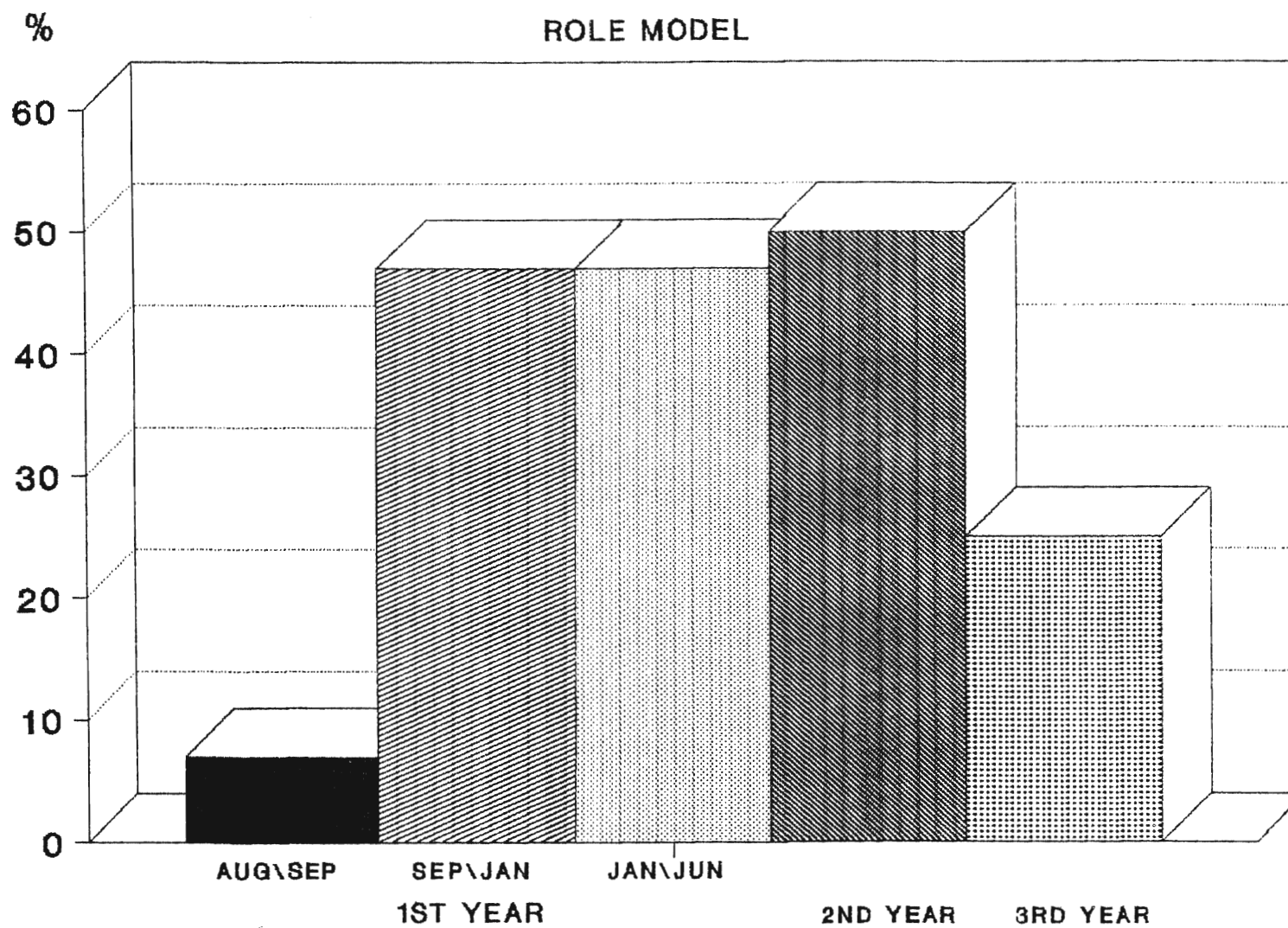
Twenty percent of the mentoring pairs indicated that the mentor undertook a teaching role during the first part of Year One. By January of this year the mentor teaching role was reported to exist in sixty percent of the relationships, while the number reporting this teaching role reduced to forty percent during the balance of the year. This number increased to fifty percent during the second year while none of the mentoring pairs reported a mentor in



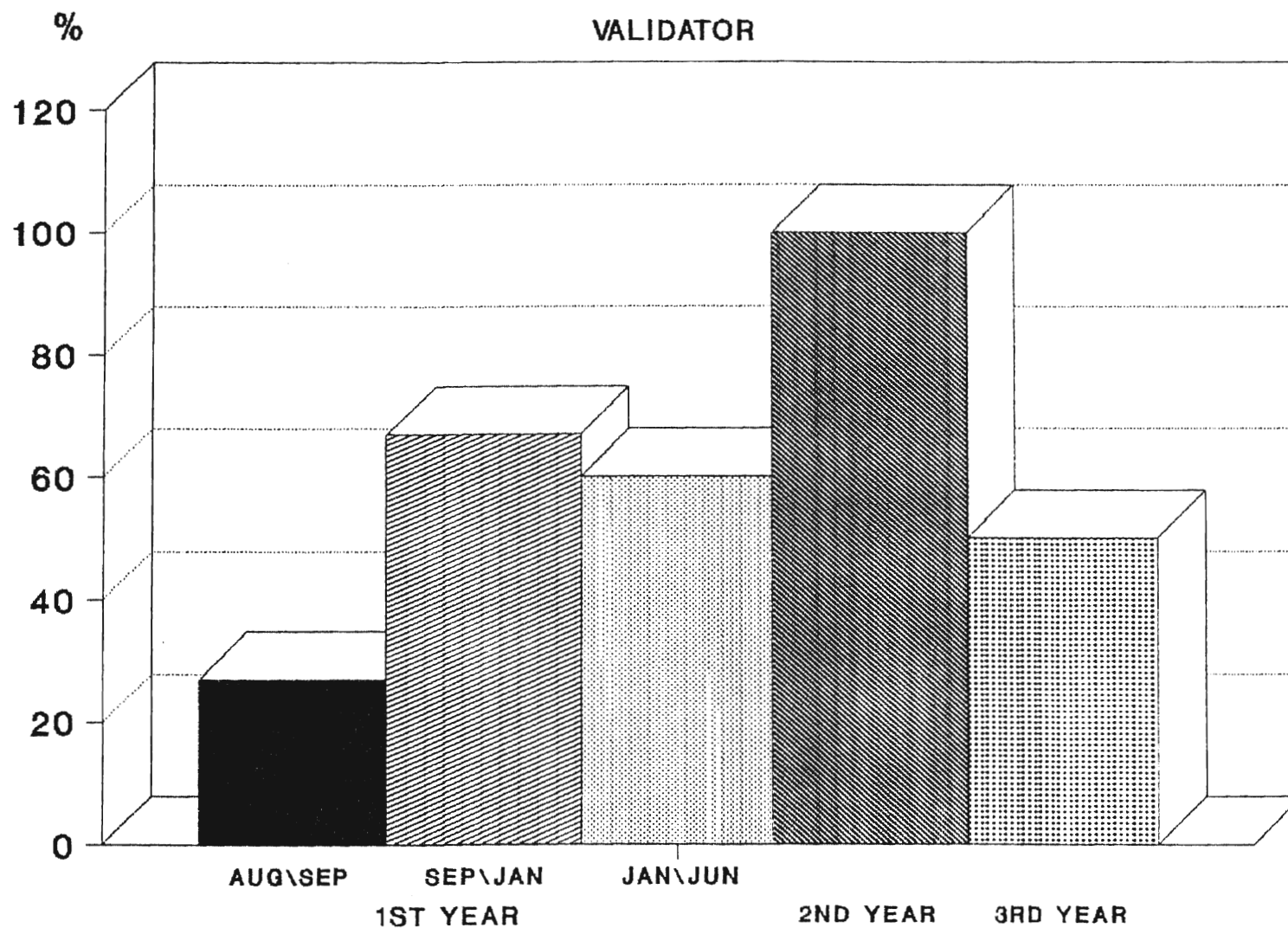
**Figure 16.** The Changing Role of the Mentor Teacher Over a Three-Year Period.



**Figure 17.** The Changing Role of the Mentor Teacher Over a Three-Year Period.

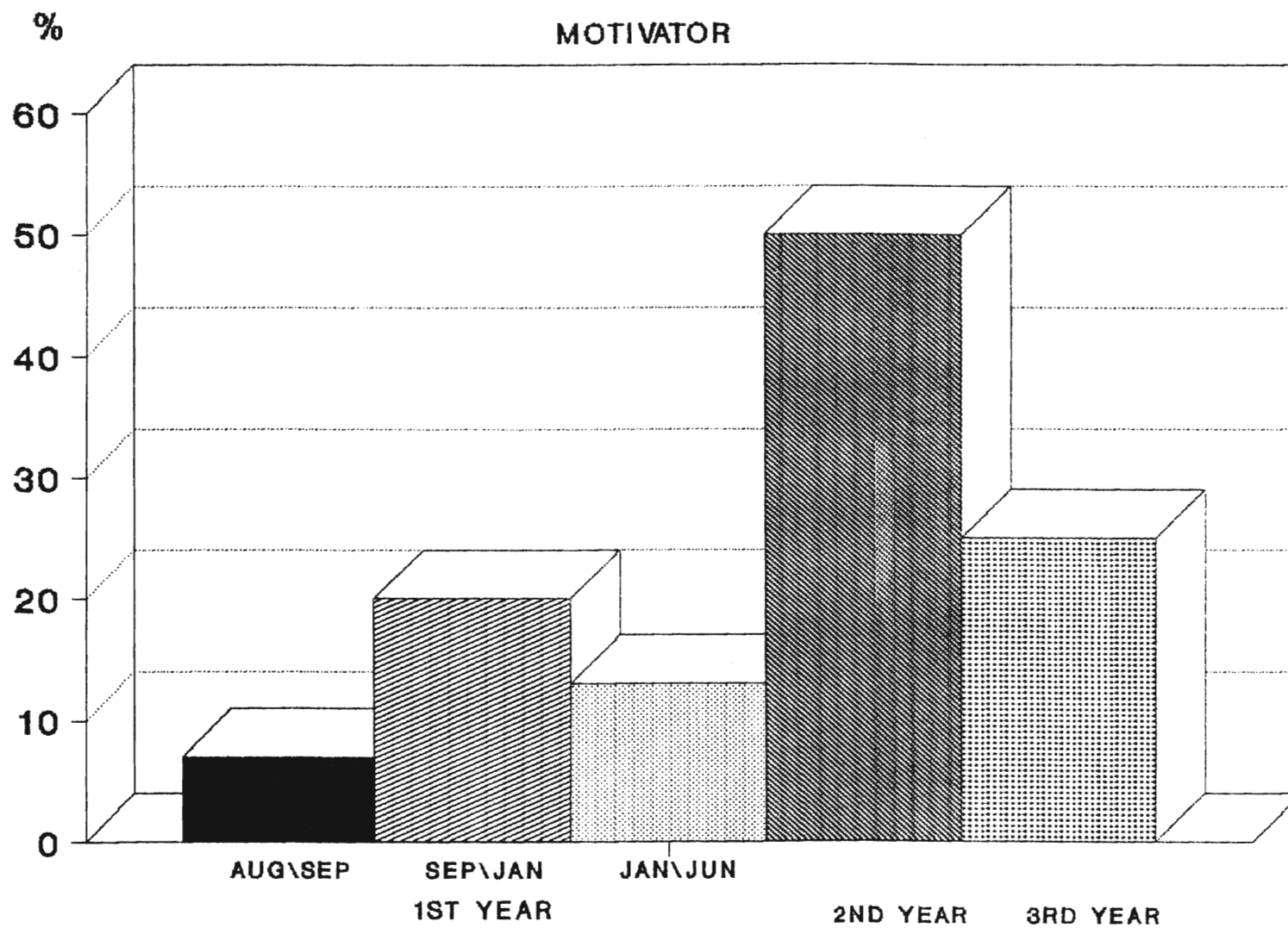


**Figure 18.** The Changing Role of the Mentor Teacher Over a Three-Year Period.

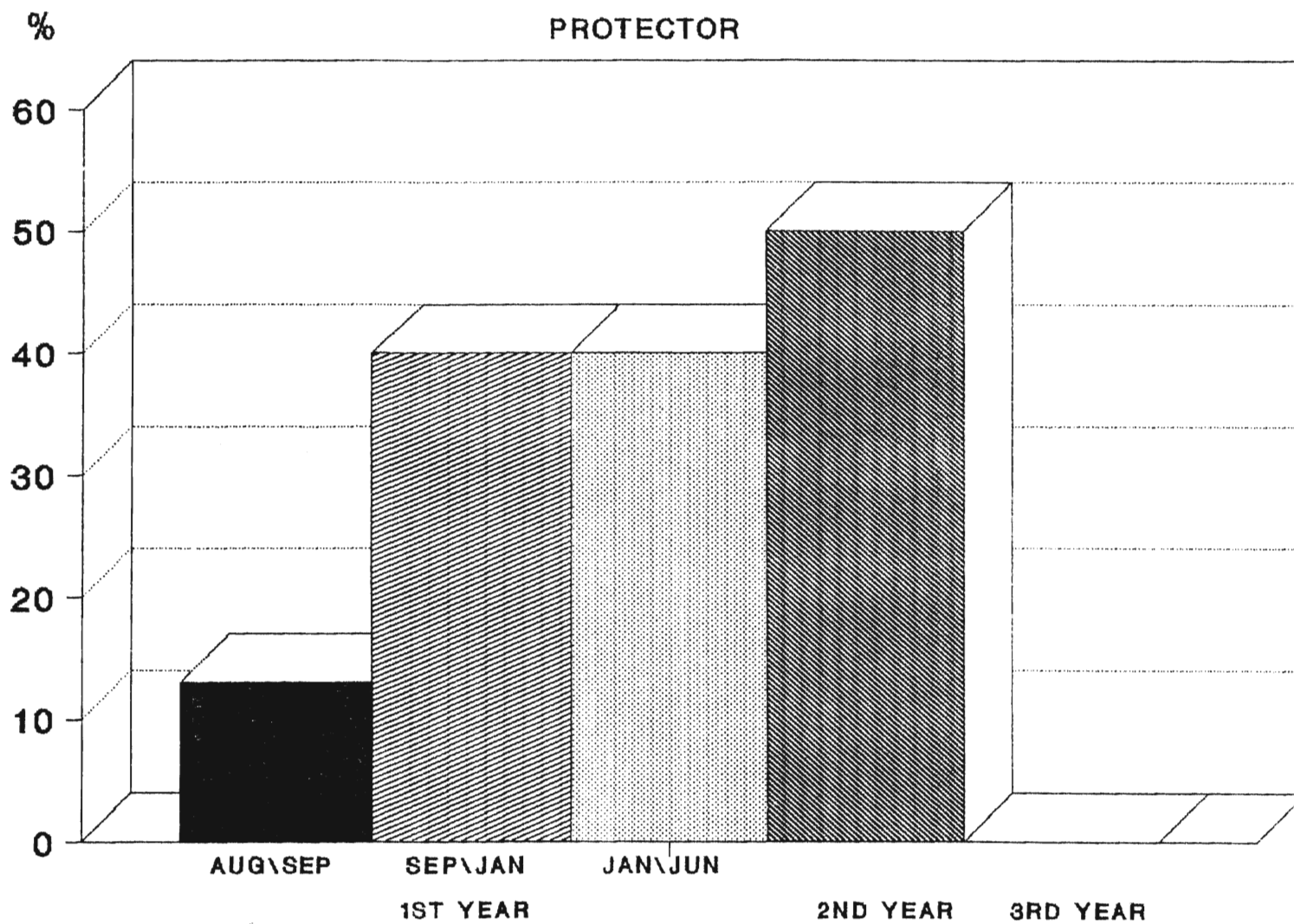


**Figure 19.** The Changing Role of the Mentor Teacher Over a Three-Year Period.

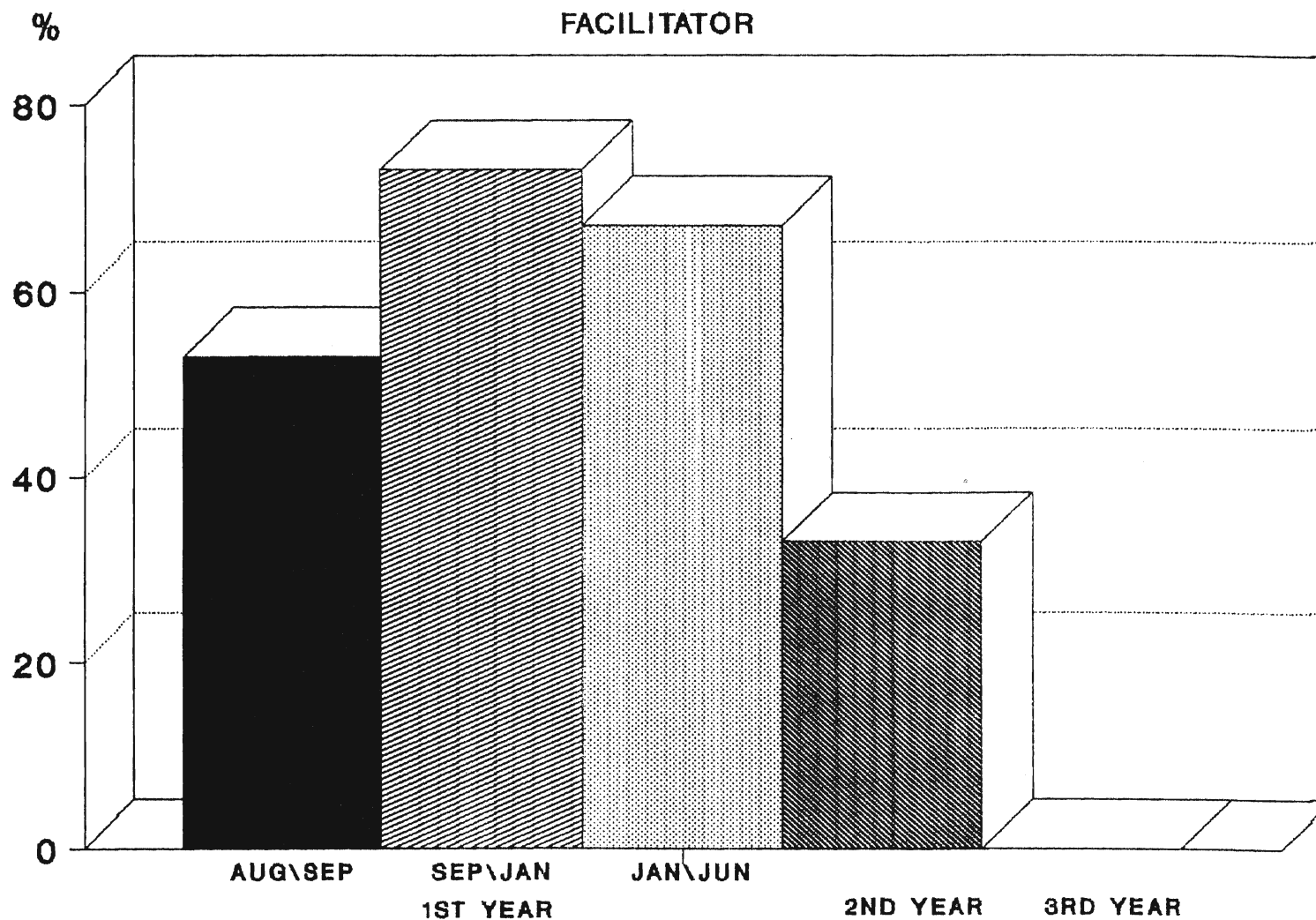




**Figure 20.** The Changing Role of the Mentor Teacher Over a Three-Year Period.



**Figure 21.** The Changing Role of the Mentor Teacher Over a Three-Year Period.



**Figure 22.** The Changing Role of the Mentor Teacher Over a Three-Year Period.

the teaching role during the third year. Throughout the first year, one hundred percent of mentoring pairs surveyed indicated that advice and counsel were being provided by the mentor teacher. During the second year the number of mentors that assumed the role of providing advice and counsel was reduced to eighty percent and again to twenty-five percent during third-year mentoring relationships.

Sponsoring of first-year teachers by their mentors occurred in thirteen percent of the paired relationships throughout the first year. This was followed by an increase to twenty-five percent during the second and third year of the relationships.

During late August and early September, only seven percent of the surveyed pairs reported that role modelling had occurred. The reported instances of role modelling jumped dramatically to forty-seven percent for the balance of the first year and to fifty percent during Year Two. A reduction to twenty-five percent was observed during the third year.

During the first few meetings in late August and early September of the first year, twenty-seven percent of the survey group reported that the mentor was acting as a validator for the mentee. During the balance of the first year this percentage increased to sixty-seven percent during September through December, and reduced to sixty percent from January through to June. Mentoring activity in this

area increased again to one hundred percent in the second year and fell to fifty percent during Year Three.

Mentors acting as motivators were reported by only seven percent of participants during the early part of Year One. This number increased slightly to twenty percent during September through December then dropped back to thirteen percent for the balance of this year. This mentoring role activity increased to fifty percent of survey participants during Year Two and was reduced to twenty-five percent in Year Three.

Mentors playing the protector role during the early part of the first year was reported by thirteen percent of survey pairs and increased to forty percent for the balance of that year. Fifty percent of mentors were reported to be playing this role during the second year. There were no reports of mentors in this role during the third year.

Fifty-three percent of mentors were acting as facilitators for the first part of Year One. During the balance of the first half of the year, the number of mentors participating as facilitators rose to seventy-three percent followed by a reduction to sixty-seven percent during the second half of the first year. Mentors in the facilitator role reduced to thirty-three percent in the second year. There were no reports of mentor facilitating during the third year.

All relationships were still intact by the end of the first year while one relationship was terminated during Year Two and a second during Year Three. The termination of relationships occurred because of transfers to other schools.

Eighty-five percent of surveyed mentors said they would like to participate again in the program as a mentor teacher. Only twenty percent of the second and third group however are currently acting as a mentor in the program.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify and provide a description of the relationships between mentor and mentee teachers participating in the Halton Board of Education "Partners in the Classroom" Program. A random sample of fifteen mentoring pairs was selected. Each individual was interviewed. The first part of the interview included questions regarding demographic information relating to gender, current teaching assignment, years of teaching experience, and start date of participation in the "Partners in the Classroom" Program. The second section included questions relating to the development of the relationship during the three years since the program had been established. Information was obtained regarding:

- the initiation of the mentoring relationship;
- where, when and how often the meetings occurred;
- the kinds of issues discussed;
- how they viewed their relationship;
- the role played by the mentor teacher; and
- the mentors' desire to mentor again.

To illustrate many of the points in this section, quotes were drawn from the transcripts of the survey interviews.

### Conclusion: Demographic Data

The majority of randomly selected survey participants were female teachers (seventy-three percent). Twenty-seven percent were male. Similarly, the majority of mentors were female (sixty-six percent) while thirty-three percent were male. Sixty-six percent of the participants were female pairs, twenty percent were male pairs and fourteen percent were female-male pairs.

Approximately fifty-three percent of the study group taught at elementary school while forty-seven percent were teaching at the secondary school level. The mentor teachers possessed an average of fifteen years experience.

### Description of the Relationship Development

The findings have been examined and a description of the development of the relationships between Halton Program mentors and mentee teachers has been prepared.

The relationship development is described in terms of time periods, namely:

- August, September of Year One;
- October through December of Year One;
- January through June of Year One;
- September through June of Year Two; and
- September through June of Year Three.



### August, September of Year One

The early part of the relationship between the mentor and the first-year teacher can be described as warm and friendly with indications of the development of a collegial and professional bond. "It was a good friendship type of thing that sprung up right away."

At this time, mentoring pairs tended to concern themselves mainly with orientation issues such as supply and resource availability, school administrative procedures and organizing the classroom:

Practice teaching doesn't prepare you to actually be in a school completely on your own. It was reassuring to know that when you got there you would be placed with a teacher who would help you through the rough spots, because when I got here I didn't even know how to use the ditto machine.

They were also dealing with instructional issues such as classroom management, curriculum planning, design and setting objectives: "... we talked about curriculum. ... the day book ... plan book and long-range plans." "Generally during the first part ... his questions were around classroom control ..." "She had a group of needy kids discipline wise. So I mentioned strategies to her that would work and then checked back with her ..."

A large number of mentoring pairs reported that they worked on professional development issues such as time

management and school, board, and community climate: "I showed her some of my quick organizers, a daily organizing sheet, and then a weekly organizing sheet and then a monthly organizing sheet. So I showed her some of the short cuts to survival." "... Before school started we met everyday and he showed me all sorts of little things and things that he had learned. Basically just to organize myself. All little tips on how to get things done ..." "I think that I was able to help her feel comfortable with the whole school type environment ... of things you can expect from parents from working with in the staff, that kind of thing. What superintendents lay on the school."

To satisfy the needs of the first-year teacher the mentor teacher most often plays the role of counsellor and facilitator:

She was like my counsellor. Letting me know where things were ... how to save time ... how to handle the first week ... just what to expect and what pace to do ... getting the class organized, dealing with students, like setting the tone in the classroom ...

During this short period of time, it was evident that most new teachers required and appreciated the presence of a veteran teacher that they could rely upon for advice and counsel, and answers to their many questions.

### October Through December of Year One

During the period from October through December of Year One, the relationships between the mentoring pairs can be characterized by continuing warmth and friendliness. The professional and collegial aspects of the relationship show continued indications of development. A small number reported the development of a paternalistic climate in their relationship:

I mean [she] is a very mother-type person, very warm and open, and it's been really nice to have a friend like that because there's times when you just want somebody to say "well its okay", and "I'll take care of it this time around."

Orientation issues were of minor concern while instructional issues appeared to monopolize the attention of mentoring pairs. Amongst these instructional concerns classroom management and, curriculum planning design and goal-setting continued to be their focus: "After school started the main thrust then, in the relationship, was to deal with this curriculum issue. Start developing these units."

A large number of mentoring pairs reported spending time discussing student evaluation, report card writing, and parent-teacher interviews and relations:

How could I forget the first report card. I had trouble with any comments, just wording them, and

we sat down and wrote out a couple of comments together. I would write out a comment and show it to her and she would say well, no, try this, or this sounds better, or it will be questioned ... she helped me an awful lot ... she helped me with the evaluation sheet, dividing it up, setting up the evaluation into different subject areas because the subject ... is hard to evaluate.

Mentoring pairs increased the amount of time spent discussing school board and community climate:

It helped that he knew that school as well as how it was different from other schools; and if any expectations that I had that were way off base, he clarified it very quickly, and said "well that sort of thing doesn't happen here, this is the way it usually happens here."

Accompanying increased interest in the climate of the school was greater attention to the development of working relationships with other staff: "[She] was my prime mentor but I had a lot of support as well from my [Department] Head, Associate Head as well as other teachers in the department as far as material and approaches to teaching."

While it was reported that time management was discussed less during this period a large number of beginning teachers also reported being overwhelmed and frustrated because of the difficulties experienced in

handling the workload. Often the new teacher is not only starting a new career but is dealing with many other life changes that are major stress factors. Featherstone's (1988) concern regarding the stressful changes that a beginning teacher experiences is confirmed in the following statement:

Oh I cried a few times, at night-time when I was so tired, I'd just gotten married in the summer, like a month before I started teaching. Before I had been living in [another city]. We'd just bought a house and there were a lot of personal changes. But I was really glad that I was married because my husband had a new job and we were both working every night for hours and hours so that was good. So we've got a situation where there's two new jobs, new house, new location, new marriage, so it was a really big year for me ... There were a few I just remember crying ... I was literally one day ahead of the students and then with projects I could plan a bit ahead but I never had a feeling that I was in control of it. I always thought God, what a rat race this is. ... Once in a while she [the mentor] would see me frustrated or angry and then she would help me calm down and [help me] rationalize it [the situation].

The presence, support, caring, advice and counsel provided by the mentor teacher provides the beginning teacher with the assurance and confidence needed to make it

through the stressful time. Little and Nelson (1990) have also concluded that those responsible for the induction of teachers cannot afford to allow new teachers to deal with the issues alone. It is during these first critical months that mentor support is essential.

#### January through June, Year One

This second half of the year is marked by a noticeable increase in confidence of the first-year teacher. For many in the secondary school system the second half of the school year meant repeating the courses taught during the first half of the year:

Well, I think that she felt more confident, you know, for instance in the first semester there are so many routines that everyone here takes for granted that by the time she got to second semester she already had those under her belt and she had done the first turnaround and basically the second semester is a repeat of that and she was repeating some of the courses and so she was feeling much more comfortable with what she was doing.

While not to the same extent, similar reports came from elementary school teachers:

Well its [the frequency of meetings] dropped off a lot, only that I'm getting more comfortable in knowing more people. At the beginning of the year I think he

probably got sick of me, just going after him all the time, but now its a matter of, well, probably not very much now.

Classroom management remained an issue of concern among a large number of mentoring pairs:

Because there was one kid in the school who was a holy terror. The way he would approach teachers would be, you know, I'm telling my father and you are going to get fired, very vocal, very obnoxious. She gave me some tips on dealing with a child like that, because I hadn't encountered that before in any kind of situation be it practice teaching or anything else.

This is confirmed by Featherstone (1988) who states that one of the changes experienced by first year teachers is the tendency to become more authoritarian because of difficulties experienced with classroom management.

Even though the beginning teacher felt more confident and comfortable during the second semester, the mentors continue to play the part of facilitator and act as counsellor. Some mentors continued to be protective and in some cases paternalistic: "I feel very protective, and then I think I don't want to be a mother to her ... [she] is my special protégé ... and I don't want to see her do things that may tarnish her reputation."

During this period the new teacher increasingly used the mentor to validate their ideas regarding programming of curriculum and teaching strategies and techniques.

The relationship between the mentor and mentee continued to be warm and friendly, professional and collegial. There were some indications that a peer relationship was beginning to develop.

#### Year Two

With a few exceptions from September to June of Year Two the roles played by the mentors did not change. As of June of Year One the formal "Partners in the Classroom" program ended for the new teachers. An important step in this study was to discover what happened to these relationships after that first year. Therefore a number of second- and third-year teachers and their mentors were interviewed.

Most interviewees agreed that the first year of teaching was for the most part task-oriented; learning and working in this new culture and just basically surviving. Second-year teachers armed with this well-earned sense of confidence began to think about professional growth and many of the mentors encouraged and supported this new direction.

She [the mentor] didn't talk much about professional development [during] the first year ... She said the first [year] just sort of keep



your head above water and get a feel of things and start feeling comfortable, then look on to your own career development and working with other groups ... She encouraged me to go to the Halton workshop where they display all the things [professional development activities] available and said you should try it with the Heads Up or the Leadership Services.

The senior teacher in this case took it upon herself to continue acting as this new teacher's mentor even though the formal mentoring program had ended. In this particular case the emphasis, or one of the main topics of discussion, was career development. The mentor went through the stages of counselling, motivating, facilitating, and sponsoring:

... In my year-end report with the vice-principal I mentioned her [the mentee] long-term plans. She ultimately thinks she would like to manage a department, be a department head, so I mentioned this to my vice-principal, and said to her that in the next two or three years I will be trying to encourage her [the mentee], instead of this inward focus at school to be looking outward. With that in mind I would be recommending a couple of leadership courses.

The mentor followed up and ensured that appropriate letters of recommendation were prepared to support the

mentee's successful bid for entrance into the Board leadership program.

There were many instances such as this among the second-year mentoring pairs. A large number of second- and third-year mentees and mentors also reported that while they had developed a warm and friendly, professional and collegial relationship during the first-year period, they were beginning to sense the additional development of a peer relationship. That is to say they were beginning to feel a sense of professional equality:

I wasn't so egocentric, like "what am I going to do in the classroom today", and you know our department is very progressive, so there's always new things. So I got to the point where, "well I have some experience now" and I could input ... I can share with somebody else [other teachers] and help them ... I can have input and that it is going to be valuable input and that people are going to accept it ... It means I am a professional and being treated as such.

Most mentors sensed the mentees' need for greater independence, and as a consequence, were less proactive in the relationship, allowing and/or encouraging a peer relationship to develop:

I think she feels comfortable coming to me. She certainly does not have the need that she had last year. She has really gotten a good handle on the

classroom management side of it. She is dealing phenomenally well with the curriculum side of it ... There is a little of that mentoring relationship but it [is] really quite naturally evolving more as a peer thing in our dealings and I'm pushing that a little bit because you know it's a little like the bird that has to be pushed [out of the nest].

It would appear that the turning point in the development of a peer relationship, for both the new teacher and the mentor, occurs when it is recognized that the mentee is able to make not only competent teaching decisions with confidence, but is also able to contribute something meaningful to the relationship:

This last semester. We started off it was still a mentoring idea [relationship], "this is how the course is done". I'd have to say that ... a week into the course, the mentoring concept of the course dissolved and it is more of an equal sharing of ideas and in some areas ... I ... am now mentoring him.

While this type of situation is perhaps unusual, the important point is that the mentee felt that he was making at least an equal professional contribution to the mentoring relationship and thus movement toward that of becoming a peer.

Along with the development of the peer relationship, it was determined that the beginning teacher more often tended to use the mentor to validate their ideas and plans:

I've gone to her and said "what do you think of this?" Or if I have developed a test or exams for example, where you have to have a balance of the different skills and she says "I don't think that's a very good type of question because", and she'll explain why or you might be over testing something [she will say] "why do you want to do that?" She is a very intelligent person ... That's why I have used her as that person to get criticism.

#### September Through June of Year Two

Second-year experience was accompanied by the mentees' new-found and growing self-confidence, and for many the ability to take the time to look outward by becoming involved in school affairs outside of the classroom and look forward by thinking about and taking positive steps toward professional development. While issues of an instructional, administrative and professional nature continued to be of concern, the new teacher appeared to have developed the ability and the desire to personally manage these issues while requiring a greater amount of validation support and only minimal direct input from their mentor.

The mentor on the other hand, still played the roles of teacher, counsellor, sponsor, role model, validator, motivator, facilitator, and in some cases protector. The focus of the need had changed from task-oriented support required by the mentee to professional development and growth type discussion and direction. The mentor role as motivator, sponsor and facilitator became an important part at this stage of the relationship.

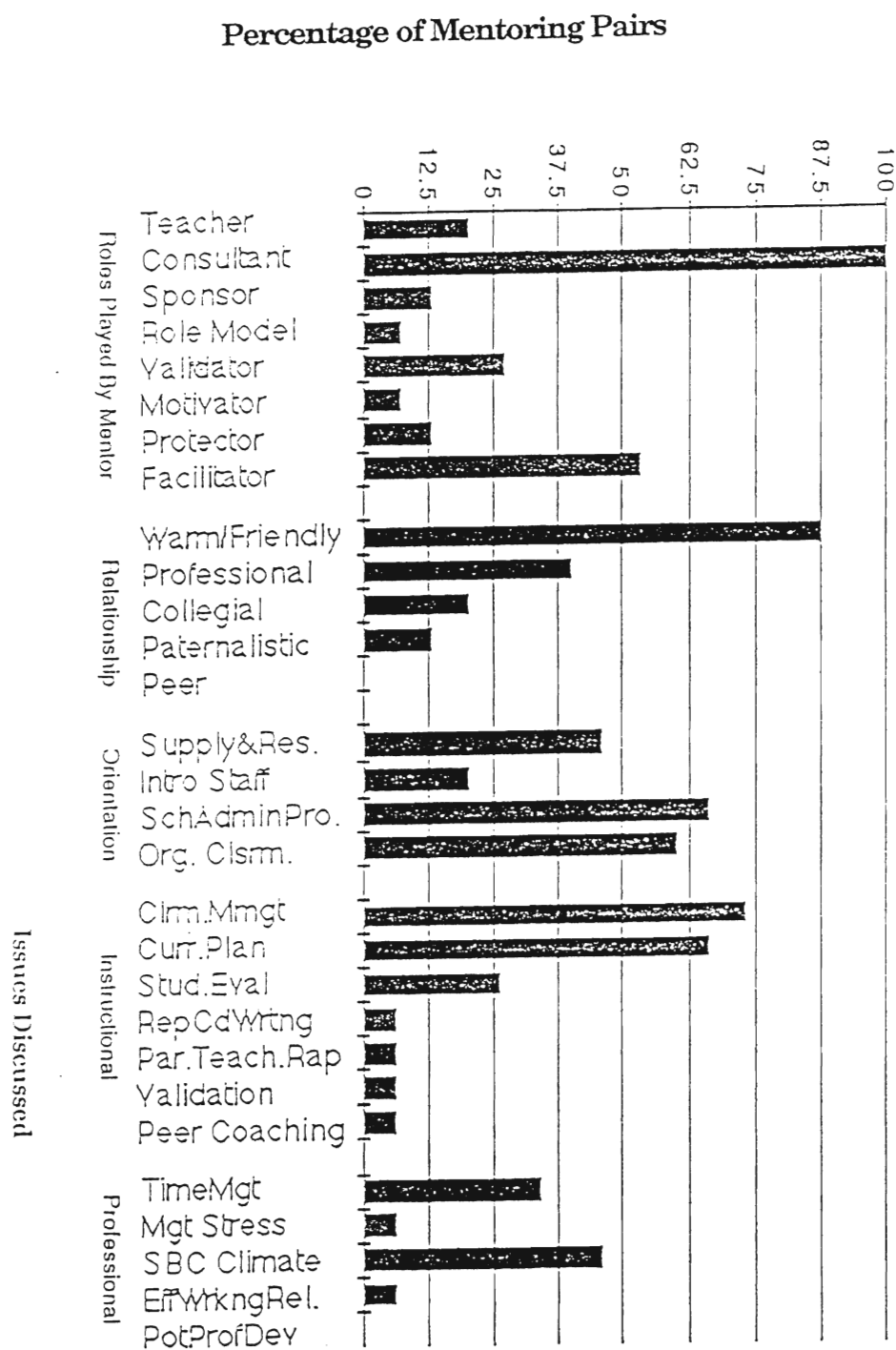
#### September Through June of Year Three

At the third-year stage, the relationship between the majority of mentoring pairs can be described as warm, friendly and caring, and one in which the mentor and new teacher look upon each other as competent professionals, fellow colleagues and peers.

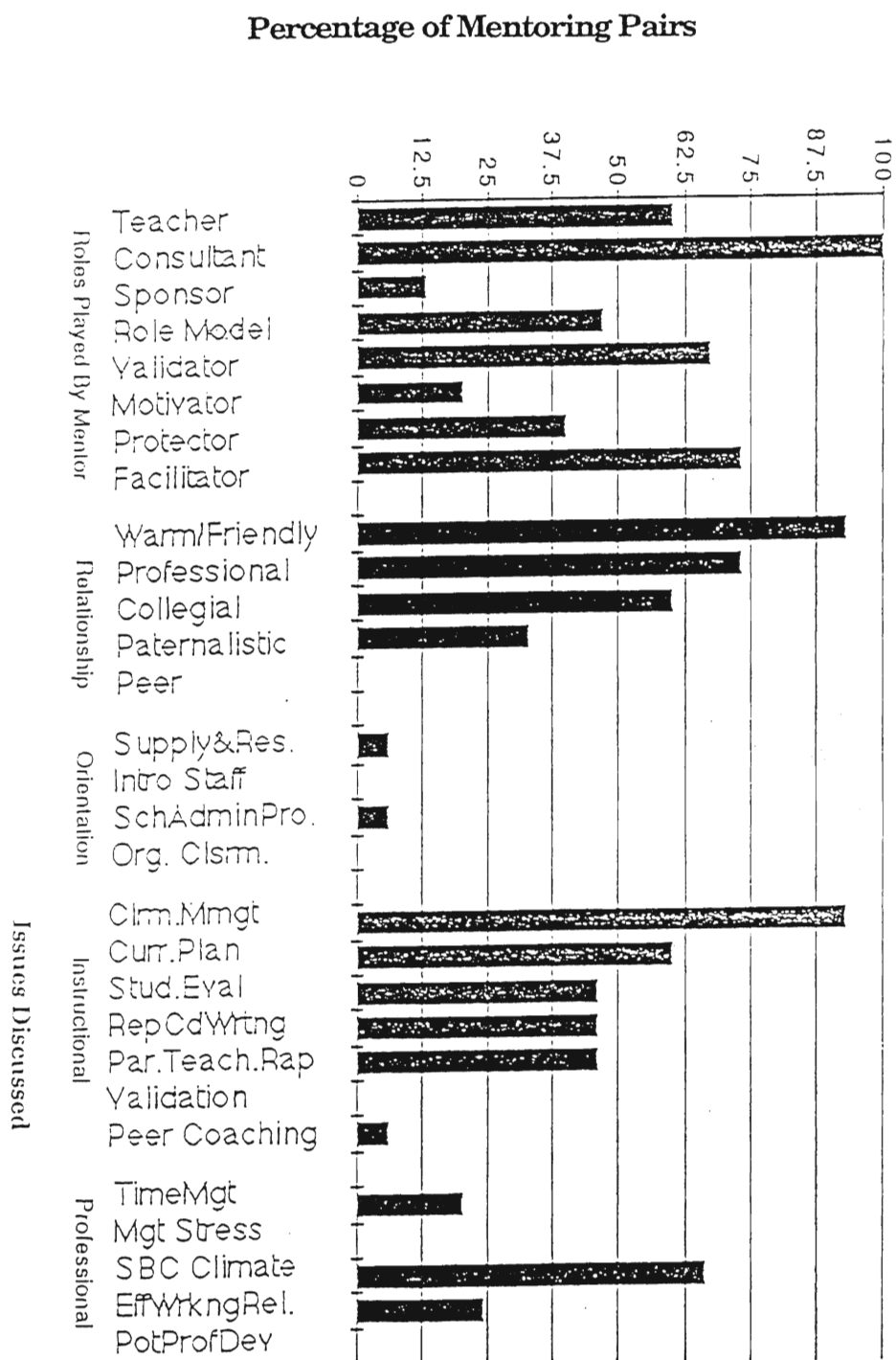
In most cases, the amount of time spent together is minimal. While in all relationships the mentoring relationship still exists, it is not used very often. At this point the third-year teacher had developed a large support network of teachers and resource professionals and therefore did not need the intensity of input that was required from the mentor during the first two years. Some of the mentors continued to want to protect their protégé. The discussions between mentoring pairs, when they occurred, were often related to professional development.

The findings of this study are supported by Gerke and Kay (1974) when they indicate that relationships of mentoring pairs are developmental. Appel and Trail (1987) also found that the roles of the mentors change over time. Tables 3 to 7 provide a summary of the changes over time in the relations of Halton Board teachers involved in the mentoring process.

**Table 3. Description of Roles, Relationships and Issues Discussed Between Mentoring Pairs During the First Part of Year One.**

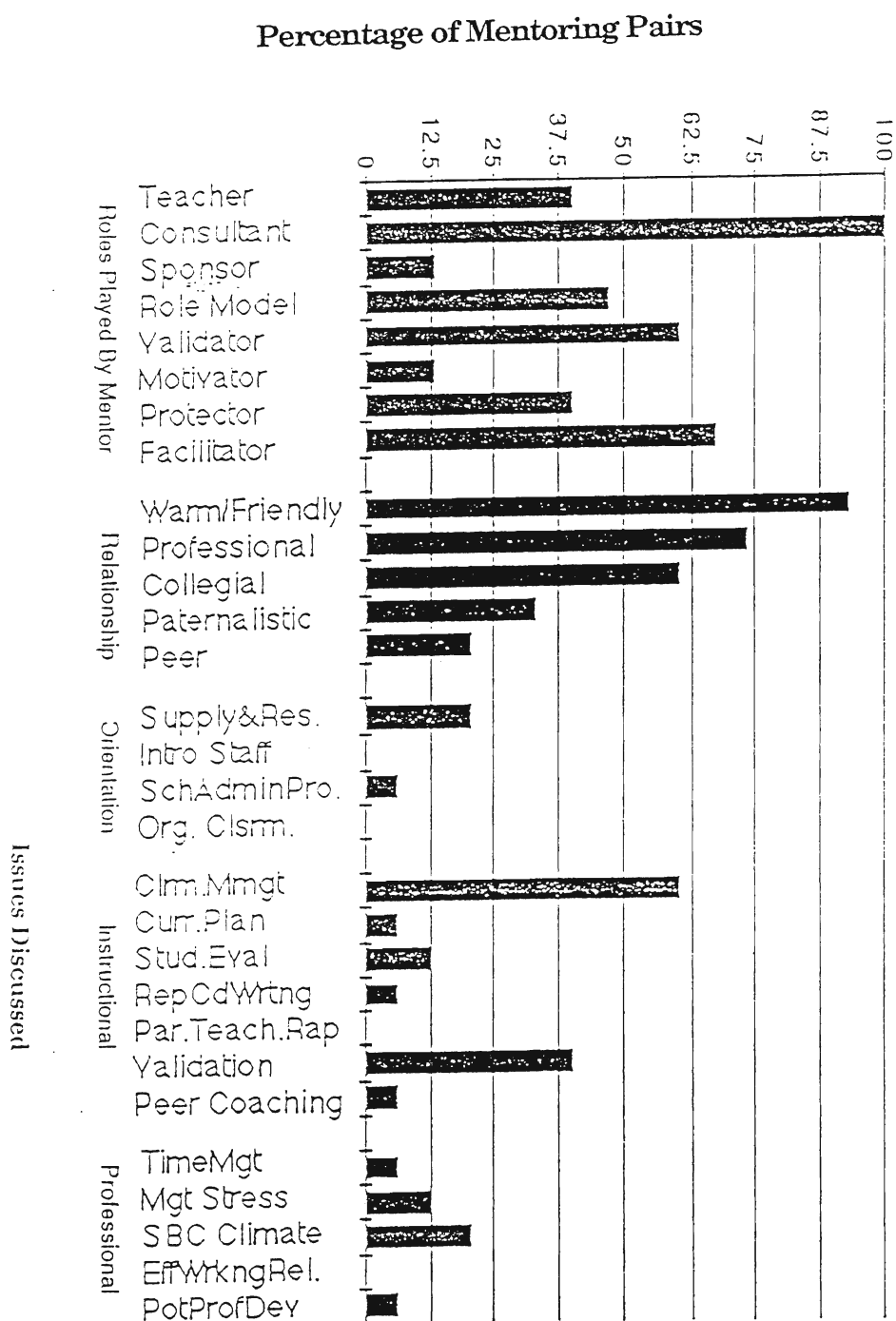


**Table 4. Description of Roles, Relationships and Issues Discussed Between Mentoring Pairs From October to January of Year One.**

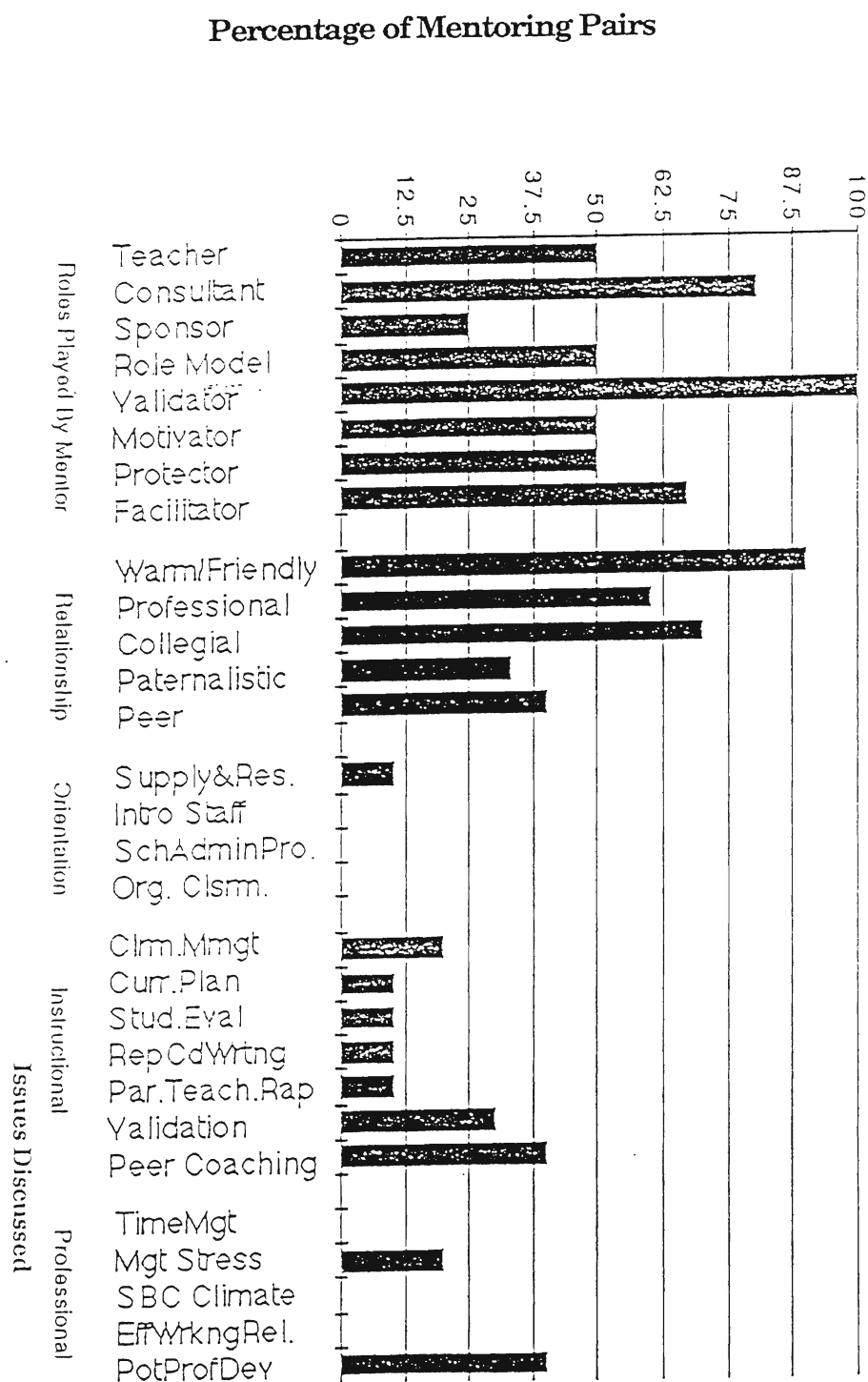




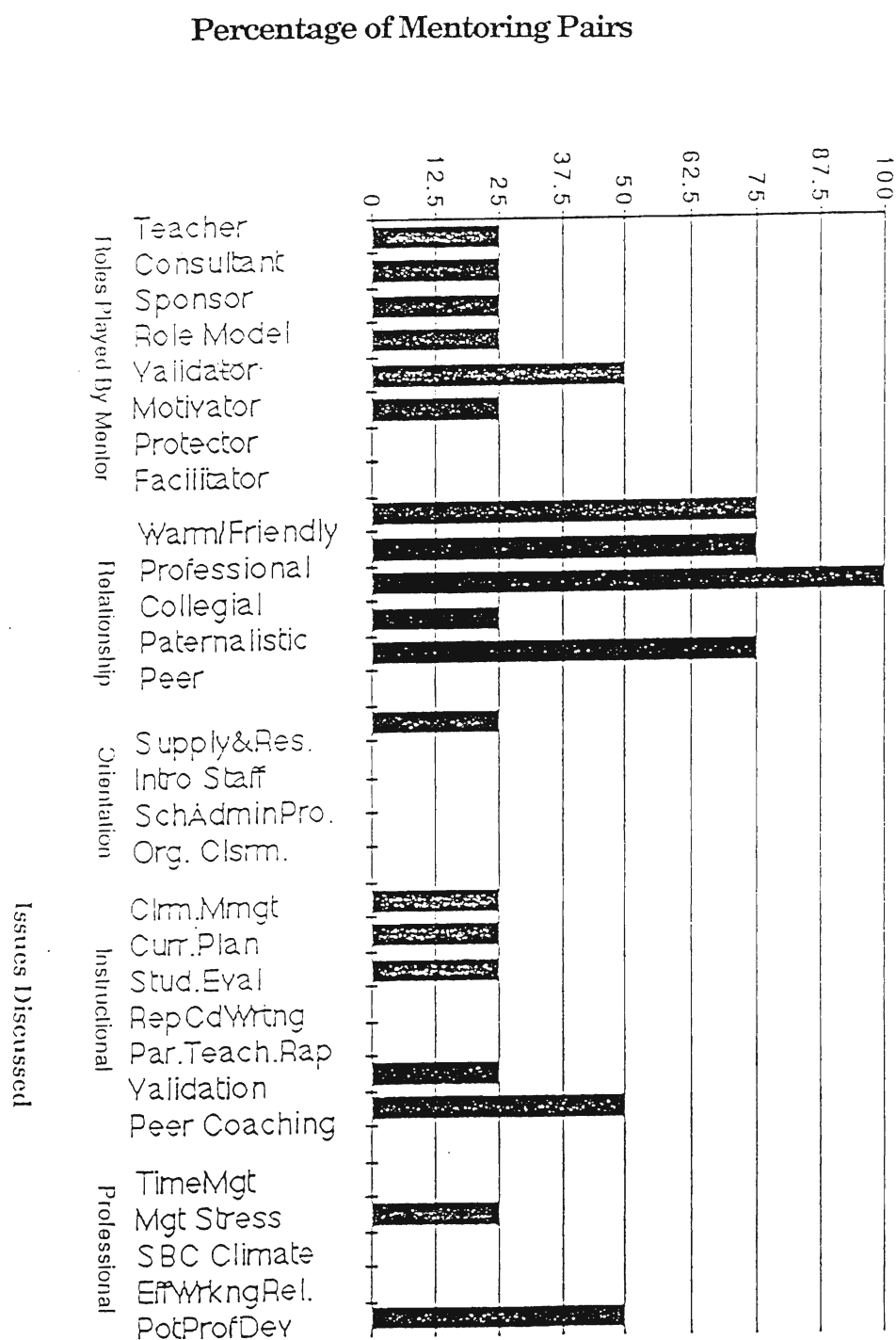
**Table 5. Description of Roles, Relationships and Issues Discussed From January Through June of Year One.**



**Table 6. Description of Roles, Relationships and Issues Discussed Between Mentoring Pairs During Year Two.**



**Table 7. Description of Roles, Relationships and Issues Discussed Between Mentoring Pairs During Year Three.**



### Implications

In the short term, the results of this study have implications for the design and conduct of mentoring staff development programs. Being able to anticipate and forecast changes in mentor-mentee relationships will provide trainers with the opportunity to develop useful program assessment tools. In addition the design of the mentoring training can be strengthened to provide more effective guidance and support for the mentor and mentee as these relationship changes take place.

A long-term approach toward examining these relationships over time should take place because of the importance of gaining a valid understanding of what happens to these relationships over a period of several years. Since the active focus on most recent programs is on the induction of the first-year teacher, it would be of interest to know the results of these studies over the longer term to determine their implications and possible opportunities for longer term staff development programs.

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## Appendix I, p.1

## Interview Guide

## Section A: Background Information

1. Female ☐ Male ☐

2. Current Teaching Assignment

Elementary ☐ Secondary ☐

3. How many years have you been teaching?

a) In first year ☐

b) Less than 5 years ☐

c) 5 - 10 years ☐

d) 11 - 15 years ☐

e) More than 15 years ☐

4. When did you participate in the "Partners in the

Classroom" program?

As a mentor

As a

first year teacher

1988/89 ☐ ☐

1989/90 ☐ ☐

1990/91 ☐ ☐

5. How do you feel about the experience?

As a mentor

As a first year

teacher

Very worthwhile ☐ ☐

Quite worthwhile ☐ ☐

Not very worthwhile ☐ ☐

Not at all worthwhile ☐ ☐

## Section B: Relationship Profile

Appendix I, p.2

1. How was the relationship initiated?
2. Did you know your partner prior to this time?
3. a) Where and when did you hold your meetings? (probe when)

Were meetings scheduled or did they occur on an ad hoc or as needed basis?

- b) Who usually initiated the meetings?
- c) Approximately how many meeting did you have?

1st year

2nd year

3rd year

4. What kinds of issues were discussed during the  
1st year (attempt to get more detail eg. before and after  
Christmas)

2nd year

3rd year

eg. orientation item

professional development

person attitudes, ideas about life

morals, values

school climate

other professional staff and how to deal with them

instructional, curricular and classroom management

issues.

5. a) How would you describe your relationship during the first few meetings?

- strictly professional
- strictly instructional (skill strategy)
- warm and friendly
- paternalistic
- collegial
- other

b) How and when did the character of this relationship change during the first year or since that time?

second year

third year

6.a. Did the role (function) of the mentor teacher change during the period of the first year

second year

third year

Describe in detail.

Probes: Role sample

Teaching

Guiding

Counselling

Sponsoring

(continued)

## Appendix I, p.4

Role Modelling

Validating

Motivating

Protecting

Communicating

Facilitating

Other

6.b. Are you still working together to implement some of the same strategies, or has the relationship moved on?

7. How do you feel about the effectiveness of relationship now. Do you value it as much/more/less as you did when it was first established?

Explain, how it compares to when it was first established

8. Has the relationship terminated?

When Why How Describe the process.

9. a) Are you acting as a mentor for another teacher now?

If yes, describe.

b) Would you like to mentor (again)? Why?